Spiritual Infatuation,

The Principal Cauſe of our *Paſt* and *Preſent* Diſtempers.

Or a ſerious

CAVEATE

to the many Seducers and Seduced, who under the ſpecious pretences of Reformation and Conſcience endeavour the ſubverſion of Church and State.

In ſeveral Sermons on *Iſa.* 9, 10, 11, 12.

By *W. Stamp* D. D. late Miniſter of the Word at *Stepn y* near *London.*

LONDON,
inted for *Tho. Johnſon* at the Golden ey in St. *Pauls* Church-yard. 1662.

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To the Right Honourable,

THOMAS
EARL OF
CLEAVLAND,
Baron of NETTLESTEAD,
Lord *WENTWORTH*,

My ever Honoured Lord and Patron.

My LORD,

THe ample experience I have had of your Favour and Benignity, both at home and abroad, commands me to put these Papers under the shelter of your Lordships protection: Which I do not so much to let the world see my gratitude, as to satisfie my self in point of judgement and diseretion

tion. For were I altogether a ſtranger to your Perſon, or to that place which was once my *Home* by your Lordſhips goodneſs; yet the Rarity of your unblemiſhed Honour in this ignoble age, and the Eminency of your Heroick Spirit, would invite me to caſt my anchor on the firmeſt bottom. The truth is (as theſe totterin times are) there are few of your Lordſhips Quality, that dare be Patrons, an there are fewer then thoſe that can b Patrons. Truth never ſtood in more need never met with leſs power to protect it The wildneſs and ſeverity of the Times enforce thoſe of our Coat, and perſeverance in our duties to God and the King to ſeek for Patronage, not to the greateſt *Book-man*, but to the beſt *Sword-man*. For Pens, Preſſes, and Pulpits, are now awed and governed as the Sword ſhall peaſe to dictate and determine. So that, what wit the terrors of an exorbitant Militar Power, and what with the attractives Advantages, ariſing from the preſe changes: unwary and ungrounded pe-

ſo-

sons of all Ranks and Qualities, deserting themselves and their own Consciences, have followed their pernicious Leaders such a Wild-goose chase, as will make posterity at once admire, and blush to derive from such a degenerate and mercenary Generation. In which general defection, it cannot but very much correct the severity of your low and exiled condition, that (however it shall please God to dispose of Publike Affairs) you are yet secured in the felicity of your Memory, in that in the worst of Times you have obtained Mercy to be found faithful and couragious in the defence of your Soveraign's power; and in that, the Churches, your own, and all honest mens Interests.

My Lord, You shall meet with nothing in this Treatise that may preserve it from contempt and scorn, more then the plainness and sincerity of it; which being directed to your Tenants (in discharge of my faithfulness to them) owes it self in the first place unto your Lordship, which

I shall follow with my prayers, that God would make it unto them a Glass wherein they may see the error of their doings in these rebellious times; and that he would preserve your Lordship to be yet a more glorious Instrument of his justice, upon a Blood-thirsty and Deceitful Generation of Hypocrites. This shall be the constant and sincere Devotion of

Your Lordships
Most humble, faithful,
and obliged servant,

William Stampe.

To the Master, Wardens, Assistants, *and* Brothers *of the* Trinity house *in* Ratcliff, *and to all other Inhabitants within the Parish of* Stepney.

My Dear Friends and Parishioners.

IT is not for any other Satisfaction so important, as the discharge of my Conscience towards God and your souls, that puts me upon this dangerous adventure of writing unto you at this time. Wherein I do apparently hazard more, as to all secular respects and aimes, then any byassed advantage can compensate. But as it was S. Paul's *pious care to write Epistles unto those places where he had formerly Preached; so it shall be mine, chusing rather to speak unto you by my Pen, then not at all.*

It is now almost eight yeers since I had the freedom of speaking unto you as your Spiritual Embassador from Christ. The sufferings, hazards, and extremities I

have undergone since that time, for the preservation of my heart from a deliberate wound (though it be the matter of much Spiritual joy and thanksgiving, as the highest honour that poor flesh and blood is capable of in this vale of misery) yet to waste any of this Paper in a particular Narrative thereof, would savour more of a mendicant design, then of that sincere advice I intend unto you. 'Tis enough ye know, that God hath hitherto preserved and supported me by his unspeakable mercy and goodness; and I hope (in his secret wisdom) hath reserved me for his further service, in the place where he once set me. In the mean time, I hope a well meaning man, who hath been peaceable and faithful in our Israel, 1 Sam. 20. 19. *may have leave to publish those serious Conceptions which are within his heart, like wine that hath no vent,* Job 32.19. *and can no longer with duty and Conscience be suppressed.*

To pass by the Controversies of these sad times so unsuccessively disputed both in Ink and Blood; I shall only represent

unto

unto you the Map of your Native Country in its preſent blindneſs, iniquity, and confuſion; which is (doubtleſs) ſo much the greater, by how much the leſs we are ſenſible of the ſevere hand of God upon us. For that which makes our wonnds ſo deſperate (if not incurable) is our averſeneſs to have them ſearched by a faithful hand. He that ſhall enter into the ſad contemplation of Englands preſent eſtate and condition, and compare it with what it was of late yeers, ſhall diſcern a very ſtrange and viſible Eclipſe of Gods favour towards it, and (notwithſtanding all pretenſes of Reformation, or new lights, or glorious days) ſhall have reaſon to ſuſpect that the Candle of the Goſpel is either in danger to be quite extinguiſhed, or at leaſt burns very dimnly amongſt us, and does apparently dwindle.

For to begin with that which ſhould be moſt dear unto a Nation (the eſtabliſhment of Religion in its Purity and Luſter) who is not ſenſible how far the Ark of God (namely our Religion, the glory of our

Israel, and the Christian world) hath been surprized by profane and sacrilegious hands, whilst the name of the Gospel and Reformation hath been used as a stalking horse, to disguise and palliate the blackest designs the Sun ever lookt upon; insomuch that the Church of England may complain and cry out, as once the Church of Israel did, Isa. 24.16. My leanes, my leanes, wo unto me; the trecherous dealers have dealt trecherously; yea the trecherous dealers have dealt very trecherously. *Certainly there is no Divel so improved and compleat as the white Divel; the Prince of Darkness is never so perniciously fortunate in his mischief, as when he transforms himself into an Angel of light; and our Religion could never have received so deep a wound from any infernal stratagem as from the plausible pretensions of refining and securing it unto us. How well it is refined and secured, your selves may judge by the present Complexion of our Dear Mother, stript and mangled, and wounded to death by the sons of her own bowels.*

Her

Her Government dissolved; Her Feasts (the Religious Commemorations of the great mysterie of salvation) abolished; Her sacred Forms of Prayer (the sweet harmony and agreement of hearts and voices) vilified and scorned; Her Prophets (the Ambassadours of Christ for Peace and Reconciliation) imprisoned, impoverished, and reputed as the filth and off-scouring of the world. Her Champions (that should maintain her Doctrine against the frauds and fallacies of her subtile and malicious Adversaries) expell'd and banished the School of the Prophets. Her Doctrine (extracted purely from the Fountain of living water) invaded, and trampled into a muddy puddle. Her Discipline discharged and threatned, not daring to appear against avouched, and professed Heresies and Blasphemies. Her Temples either defaced and demolished, or else locked up by the Military Power; Insomuch that in one of her Cities (as I have been credibly informed) viz. Lincoln, the Sacramental Bread and Wine hath not been communi-

cated

cated for three years together. And lastly the True Protestant Religion (which by solemn Protestation we were obliged to maintain) is now squeezed into such a narrow room, that few or none dare own the Profession of it, unless it be upon the scaffold, where innocence is secured from any future blow of malice.

So that as when a mirrour is broken in pieces, it represents the same object divided and deformed, which before was entire and amiable; so the Bond and Composure of Religion, when it is once broken and dissolved, is apt to splinter it self into a thousand Heresies and Schismes, which nothing less then a miracle can piece and redintegrate. Thus (by sad experience) we see our just and angry God hath forsaken his House, deserted his Heritage, given the dearly beloved of his soul into the hands of her enemies; Jer. 12. 7. And now, how do our enemies round about us, the Jesuite abroad, and the Schismatick at home, I and the infernal spirits under us, clap their malicious hands, saying, There,

There,

There, so would we have it! *not knowing, that the severest Persecution is not the weakest Argument of the Gospels Profession, in its greatest candor and sincerity.*

In the second place, if you shall cast your eyes upon the Civil Government, you cannot but discern the goodliest Fabrick of the Christian world demolished, and dissolved into nothing else but rubbish and confusion. Certainly God was not well pleas'd with your disputing the rights of King and Parliament by Tumults and Arms, and secret fallacies; who hath suffered you to wade into that dispute so far, and with such ill success, as to have neither King nor Parliament left you for your shelter and protection, unless it be such a Parliament as God in his justice hath design'd to be the general grievance and disease of the Kingdom.

Not to expatiate far in describing the excellency of the Regal, beyond all other kinds of Government whatsoever, as having its foundation first in Nature, and afterwards its establishment over that People

People, where God himself was the Legislative Power. 'Twill be enough to satisfie all dis-interessed Persons to know, that it was propounded unto the Israelites not only as the best form of Government, but as a reward of Uprighteousness and Integrity, and a particular expression of Gods mercy and favour towards them, as appears, Jer. 22. 34. Thus saith the Lord, Execute ye Judgement and righteousness, and deliver the spoyled out of the hand of the Oppressor, and do no wrong nor violence to the stranger, fatherless, and widdow; and then shall there enter in by the gates of this House, Kings sitting upon the Throne of David, riding on Chariots, and Horses, he and his servants, and his people. *And when that people should sin themselves out of that blessing, See how God threatens them with a contrary punishment,* Isa. 3. 5. The people shall be oppressed every one by another, and every one by his neighbour; the child shal behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable.

nourable. *And for that Text which is so much insisted on to prove the evil of this Government, he that shall look upon it with a single eye, as men ought to look upon those sacred Oracles; shall find, that the people were not reproved for asking a King (for that kind of Government was determined unto them long before, as appears,* Deut. 17. 15.) *but for rejecting their God*; They have not rejected thee, but me they have rejected. 1 Sam. 8. 7. *Sure I am, the Scripture cannot contradict it self, which says*; For the Transgression of a Land, many are the Princes thereof. Prov. 28. 2. *And* Balaam *being enlightned from God, and prophecying of the future prosperity of Israel, contracts the character of a peoples felicity into a very few words; saying*, The Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a King is among them. Numb. 23. 21. *And if these Texts be looked upon as Old Testament, and so of Jewish concernment only; see what was propheſied many hundred years before, upon the accession of the Gentiles, wherein*

we

we our selves are included. Behold, I will lift up mine hand unto the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people, and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters upon their shoulders, and kings shall be thy nursing Fathers, and Queens thy nursing Mothers. Isa. 49. 22, 23.

If it be yet objected, that the forecited Text speaks only of some favours which the Church was to receive from the indulgence and benignity of some Heathen Kings and Emperours; and that Christs Kingdom is spiritual, and the subjects thereof discharged of their obedience to any Temporal Monarch: Such may know, that they have borrowed an Argument from the Jesuits, that savours more of subtilty and ends, then any true solidity, and is sufficiently answered; 1 Pet. 2. 13. Submit your selves to every Ordinance of man, for the Lords sake; whether it be to the King as supreme; or unto Governours as unto them that are sent by him; &c. *and if you would know who they are who are thus commanded to submit*

mit; they are described v. 9, to be a chosen generation, a royal Priesthood, an holy Nation, a peculiar People: *Terms of a high sanctity and priviledge, as any can pretend to within the Christian Pale. All which I have mentioned, only to lay before your eyes that ancient and glorious form of Government which our blessed Reformers (by your concurrence and engagement) would pluck up by the roots, and abjure for ever; as if it were some monstrous or accursed thing.*

To this may be added, the experience we have had of this Government for so many generations; and the dismal change we have tasted from the want of it, for these last seven years; enough to write that counsel of Solomon *upon our hearts with a pen of iron:* My son, fear thou the Lord, and the King, and meddle not with them that are given to change; for their calamity shall rise suddenly, and who knoweth the ruine of them both? Prov. 24 21, 22. *That is (as* Deodatus *on that place) who can foresee or avoid these*

two

two sudden thunders, of divine vengeance, and a Kings wrath? And sure, if there were neither of these Terrors to aw us into our duty, yet the love of that peace and prosperity which is infallibly annexed to the observation of the fift Commandment; is inducement enough, Honour thy Father and thy Mother, that thy days may be long; or, as it is in another place, Deut. 5. 16. that thou mayst have many, and good days, &c. where by Father, the Civil Parent is (by all Expositors) as well included as the Natural. Now if we shall enquire how it comes to pass that our many and good days (which heretofore we enjoyed in peace and plenty) are changed into few and evil days; the sacred Oracle will resolve us, because we have had very little or no respect at all to the observation of this Commandment.

Plutarch tells a story of a Serpent, whose tayl was discontented that the head should have the power to govern, and carry it which way soever it pleased; and therefore petitioned, that the same Power might

might reside in the tayl another while; Which being unwarily granted, upon great importunity; the tayl (a member very active, but withal blinde) carries the head and body through many holes and crevises, till at last it brought it self into such streights, that it could not stir, but head, body, tayl and all were destroyed. This story (though but a Fable in it self) has yet a moral truth in it, which we have seen and felt by direful experience. To these high injuries and affronts done to our common Mother (the Church) and to our common Parent (the King) I might remember ye of our Laws, Liberties, Priviledges, Properties, Peace, Prosperity; *which ly trampled under foot before your eyes, as so many heaps of rubbish and confusion; to proclaim to all the world the impudent and ungodly frauds of those that pretended to be Guardians of these Common Jewels; and the infatuation of the too credulous world, that would believe them all this while.*

But if these men have thus notoriously betrayed

betrayed their trust; you will reply perhaps (with the chief Priests and Elders) Mat. 27.4. What is that to us? *Let them look to that: every man is responsible for his own, but not anothers guilt. 'Tis true indeed, these grand* Troublers of our Israel *shall bear the guilt of Principals, in the great and general day of account,* when Inquisition shall be made for blood; *but every inferiour wheel by which they have moved shall bear the guilt of an Accessory.* Judas, *and* Pilate, *and* Caiphas, *had the chief hands in the Treason and murther of our blessed Saviour; and yet the guilt of that blood extended to the whole Nation of the Jews, and to their posterity after them. In the case of blood, where the murtherer was concealed, so that no man would acknowledge the fact, the Law commanded the Judges of those times, to measure unto that City which was nearest unto him that was slain; and the Elders of that City, though they were innocent, and not so much as privie to the murther, were yet commanded to Sacrifice an Heifer,*

fer, and to pray in this form: Be merciful O Lord unto thy People Iſrael, whom thou haſt redeemed; and lay not innocent blood unto thy People Iſraels charge. Deut. 21. 8. *So precious in thoſe days was the blood of any private perſon. It would be a ſad contemplation, to lay before your eyes that red ſea of blood which hath been* ſhed like water on every ſide of our Jeruſalem, *by thoſe who dare not ſo much as pretend to have (of themſelves) a power over the lives of their fellow Subjects: But, as if all this were not guilt enough to weigh them down to the bottomleſs pit, there hath been added to that ſcarlet ſin, the blood of one Sacred Perſon, of more value then* 10000. *of the beſt of his Subjects, by the Scriptures own computation,* 2 Sam. 18. 3. *namely,* the light of our eyes, and the breath of our noſtrills. *Lam.* 4. 20. *In whoſe life and government all the thouſands that reſide within his three Kingdoms, are really and nearly concerned, as in the life of their common Parent. An act ſo horrid and prodigious, that as no language can expreſs it,*

ſo

so no history can parallel it. And yet, thou
the guilt of this blood be as visible to t
world, as it's clamorous in the ears of G
yet so far are men removed out of the w
of their repentance, that no man will o
it; not so much for the guilts sake, as f
the ignominy and merit that belong to su
transcendent Traitors. And if we (who a
to deal impartially with all men) charge t
guilt of this blood, where by the law of G
and man we find it lye; the Councel (
rather the Conspiracy) is presently as high
enraged against us, as was that of the Ph
rises against S. Peter, *and proclaim us ma*
lignants and delinquents, that our design
to fill Jerusalem with our Doctrine, a
intend to bring this mans blood upon the
Act. 5. 28. *Well, what shall we do then, f*
the clearing our selves? Why, we will mea
sure to the next City; *and see if* Ezekiel
woe belongs not to it. Wo to the bloody
City, to the pot whose scum is not gone ou
of it, bring it out piece by piece, let no lo
fall upon it; for her blood is in the midst
of her, she set it upon the top of a rock, a
which

which is all one, upon the top of a Scaffold, she poured it not upon the ground to cover it with dust; that it might cause fury to come up to take vengeance; *therefore saith the Lord,* I also have set her blood upon the top of a rock, that it should not be covered, *Ezek.* 24.6,7,8. *The meaning of the Prophet is very plain; The bloody City is Jerusalem, arraigned here by the Prophet, for the bold justification of her murthers and oppressions; and therefore her blood (saith God) shall be alwaies in my sight, as a remembrancer of vengeance, which shall be so certain and general, that no lot, no casualty or exemption shall prevent the utter ruine and destruction of that City.*

And truly (my beloved friends) when I enter into a serious contemplation of the guilty condition of our bloody Jerusalem, for her boldness in murther, sacrilege, and oppression, I am heartily sorry that you (my Parishioners) are so nearly allyed unto her in your neighborhood and relations; but far more sorry you are so nearly allyed unto her

sins,

sins, as I fear you are; for if I am not mi-staken in the history of these sad times; it is no slight contribution that you have gi-ven to the miseries we complain of, tho' know not how to remedy. A man may be ac-cessory to the guilt of blood-shedding, more ways then perhaps you are aware of: Two only I shall name; first, in contributing assi-stance to the fact before it is committed. 2ly, by approbation and justification of the fact after it is committed. For (to borrow a resemblance from the learned Salmasius *upon another reflection) what think ye? Sup-pose a Gentleman who is peaceably posses-sed of his house and estate, shall be assaulted and surprized by a combination of theeves, receiving strength & encouragement from the neighbours, tenants, and servants of that Gentleman: This man, by this con-spiracy, is robbed, stripped, and dispossessed of his estate, bound hand and foot, and tyed unto a tree, and there left, till a wild beast comes and destroys him; when inquisition shall be made for the blood of this man, it will be very easie to determine at whose*

doore

dore the guilt will be found (namely) at the tenants and servants in some degree, as well as at the grand Conspirators. Or suppose these theeves shall be so impudent and pleasant in their wickedness, as in a mockery of justice, to erect a Court among themselves, and execute their own votes and conclusions in a form of Law, upon pretence the Gentleman was none of the best husbands of his estate: will this extenuate the murder, or palliate the violence, or clear the adherents? I trow not; but will prove rather an high aggravation of the wickedness. I shall leave every man to make his own application, with this assertion only; That he that is not ashamed to draw up a charge against himself in this particular, is in the hopefullest way to obtain his pardon.

It was our Saviours charge against the Scribes and Pharisees, that his Fathers house (*which was wont to be* called the house of prayer) was by them made a den of theeves *Mat.* 21.13. *I would to God it were in the power either of my Pen or Prayers, to cleer those that sit at Westmin-*

ster (once the house of God) of this deep guilt; or You of your assistance or adherence to them in contracting it; for they who at first (with Absolom*) stole away the hearts of our Israel, upon pretence of a zealous care of Religion and Judicature; have since thrived so well in their design (by the strong contribution of our sins) as hath enabled them to rob God himself of his truth and honour, the King of his revenue and life, and the Church of its patrimony, the Kingdom of its peace, and all peaceable and faithful men of their secular interests; and while they please themselves with the sad execution of some petty robbers (whom their injuries have driven into extreme want) these sit undaunted and uncontrould upon the throne of iniquity; like the great whore upon the many headed Beast, carving to themselves the satisfactions of their own* pride, ambition, and covetousness, *by vertue of their unjust and byassed Ordinances, imposed (as so many snares) upon the tame, infatuated, and abused people.*

But you'l say, what we have done here-

there-

therto in twisting with these men, we have done either out of ignorance or compulsion, not suspecting their ways would have been so bloody and abominable, or their ayms so vast and particular to themselves. Well, if this plea of yours be as sincere as it is plausible; you have the less to answer for. But yet give me leave (with an Apostle) to profess the fears and jealousies I have of you, and to tell you, that when you went to Whitehal in your long boats, with the mouth of your Canon toward your Soveraign, instructing the whole Kingdom to follow you in that loud clamour, I am sure you were not prest into that strange service. Or admit that unhappy officiousnes of yours wanted eys to guide it unto its right object and that you mistook Whitehal for the black house of Commons, by the direction and perswasion of those Prophets, who put light for darkness, and darkness for light, Is. 5. 20. *Yet it seems very strange to me, that you, whose judgements are presumed to be above the ordinary pitch of other mens, by the advantage you have of ferrain obser-*

vation; you, who have found the high repu-
tation you had formerly with all Nations
where you were employed, charged in
contempt and scorn, for your unnatural an
barbarous deportment toward your King
You, who were (many of you) obliged by pa
ticular Trusts and endearments. You, wh
have bin eaten up to bare bone by the ca
terpillars of the Land; who have felt th
little finger of your severe masters, heavie
then the loyns of your late pious Soverai
(to the honour and approbation of the Ship
mony-tax by all posterity) You that hav
served an apprentiship of more then 7 yea
to these Egyptian Taskmasters, seen the
jugling Arts, found your selves cheated
often in your expectations, that you (whe
all the world beside, look upon them as th
prodigious monsters of this age) should be
far bewitched with their sorceries, as to
still their servants (or slaves) and no Pilat
wife among you to suggest a Christian ca
tion, is a sad and sour fate, which I not
much admire as condole, and which indee
hath commanded this plain dealing Tre
tise into publike view.

So that what before (by the eye of God and man) might be lookt upon as a ſin of Ignorance (like that of the 200. men, who by ſmooth perſwaſions were induced to follow Abſolom in Rebellion, in ſimplicity of heart, not knowing whither they went, 2 Sam. 15, 11. *will now be found (if ye perſiſt longer therein) a ſin of choiſe and deliberate reſolution; wherein ye declare to the world (pretend what you will) that you highly approve of the unparalleld iniquities of theſe men;* *and* not only do the ſame things your ſelves, but take pleaſure in them that do them, *as well as take pay from them, and contract their guilt unto your own ſouls in a deeper meaſure by your Approbation, then you have done by Acting with them.*

For, give me leave to argue and conclude no otherwiſe then the Scripture does. Was Saul found guilty of the blood of the Protomartyr Stephen, only for conſenting to his death, and keeping the rayment of them that ſlew him? Act. 8. *and are not thoſe men guilty of their Soveraigns blood, who by their clamorous Petitions cried aloud; firſt, for no Treaty with him, and afterward*

no mercy on him? and since have seized, not his rayment only, but also his revenue; and are resolv'd to do as much by the heir (if God preserve him not) that the inheritance may be setled in themselves? What difference was there (in point of guilt) between the hands that drave the nails in our Saviours crucifixion, and the bold Souldiers that stood by to maintain the execution? What difference between the Souldiers that were upon the scaffold where our Soveraign was murthered, and those which stood under the scaffold, and drew their swords in approbation of that fatal stroke, which at once cut off the head of our King, and dismantled the Peace and felicity of his three Kingdoms? Or what difference between those that then drew their swords in approbation of that horrid fact; and those that now draw their swords in defence of those visible betrayers and murtherers? sure if there be any difference, the last are by much the deeper delinquents; for Non semper corrupta est mens male operantis, at semper corrupta est male defendentis. *The mind of him that worketh evil*

is

is not alwaies corrupt, but the mind of him that defendeth evil, is alwaies corrupt. And the reason why this sin is so fearful and desparate, is, because when a man commends and justifies a wickedness (knowing it to be such) its a certain signe that his judgement and conscience are both corrupted; insomuch, that he hath neither eys to see it, nor heart to be touched with the guilt and horror of it.

But youl say perhaps, our hearts did ever abhor the taking away the last Kings life, (for I instance in that only as the most notorious addition to all other evils) and were our hearts legible at present, it would be seen how zealous we are for setling the present King in his just power and authority. But alas, we are under the grasp of an Arbytrarie power, and if we were not, what can single endeavors do?

These, I presume, are the thoughts of some of you, for I have heard them from your own mouths: Truly, you have great reason to do somthing extraordinary for your King, if for no other reason, but to out do what you have done; but I have great

reason to suspect your minds do but faintly incline this way; *for* quid verba audiam, cum facta videam? *what do you speak of plausible intendments and desires, wrapt up in smooth words, when your actions look clean another way? If you have executed the Lords command* (*saith Samuel to Saul*) what meaneth the bleating of sheep, and lowing of oxen in mine ears? *If your hearts are as you pretend, what means the noise of your drums, and thunder of Cannon at Sea, in opposition and defiance of your Kings Commissions? what means the changing your Flags, and razing your Soveraigns Arms out of your Sterns, in detestation of his government? These* (*to my apprehension*) *are strange characters of loyalty in Subjects: And such as speak more devotion to Cesars picture in his Coyn, then to his Person or Power. Adoring that new minted Mammon of your new masters, in which were the cross* (*once a mark of the Beast*) *changed into a pair of Gallows, or into the Divels cloven foot, would yet* (*I fear*) *find too warm a reception in too many of you. It is thought by many*

ny wise men, that had not you been the first and fiercest of the Kings enemies, the Royal Throne had been established, and the Kingdom setled long ere this; And I beseech you look well to it; for if the kingdoms miseries increase for want of its natural Shepherd, which is more then probable; 'tis because you have taken away the wooden bridge that should convey him into his Dominions: and certainly, the guilt of all the sad consequents which shall arise upon the want of him, will one day be laid at your Cabbin dores.

But men must live in that calling wherein God hath placed them, and provide for their families, *or be concluded* worse then Infidels. 1 Tim. *We cannot (with all our endeavours sayl against wind and Tide; the current of the Times is strong, and he that spits against the wind, spits in his own face.*

Well, let all this be granted, and what else can be alledged to this purpose, and yet that maxime and conclusion of Solomon shall stand in force; He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just,

even

even they both are an abomination to the Lord, Prov. 17.15. *And that Precept of Moses shall out-live all the changes of the world,* Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil, Exod. 23.2. *It was never good world, since things have been carried all by Votes; and they that pretend to act what they do by vertue of a Power derived from the People, do most of all abuse the People; making them speak as the Divel did the Heathen Oracles, or as Friar Bacons brazen head (i.e.) what is most serviceable to their own ends. In an Age so miserably corrupted and depraved, the major part is seldom found to be the melior. And he that designs himself always to the strongest side, will certainly be involved in the broad way,* which leadeth to destruction, Mat. 7. *When you sayl together in a fleet, your Art instructs you (as you are Sea men) not to sayl as others do, at random, but that every man steer according to his own Compass; and sure, as you are Christians, and in your voyage toward the Haven of eternal happiness, Religion obligeth you to steer, not as others do, but according to the direction of*

your

your own Consciences, guided by the infallible compass of Gods Word; he that does otherwise, runs an irrecoverable hazard, and it is not by choice, but by chance, if he get safe to shore.

And as touching the support of your families; as he is worse then an Infidel that provides not for those of his own house; *by his lawful and honest endeavours; so he is no better then an Infidel, that stands in such aw of the Divel, as (with the Indians) to worship him,* ne noceat, *that he may not hurt him; and out of a secret disbelief of the divine Providence and goodness, puts himself upon hellish and unwarrantable ways for support and advantage. You know who it was that said,* all these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me; *And though the times should prove so severe and particular as to some mens designs; that S. Johns Prediction should be verifi'd among us, viz.* that no man might be allowed to buy or sell (*or to have the benefit of the Law*) save he that had the mark of the Beast in his right hand; and that as many as would

not

not worship the image of the Beast, should be killed, Rev. 13. 15. &c. *yet those who are not irrecoverably sold to their secular respects and interests, shal do well to remember that serious expostulation of our Saviour*; What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? *Or*, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? *And therefore the rule is fixed in the next verse*, Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me, and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with his holy Angels, Mat. 8. 36. *Sure I am, that (notwithstanding all our bustling after the trash of this world) we shall carry nothing beyond the grave but our Consciences, unless some certain woes and curses, contracted by the voluntary desertion of our dearest friends (our Consciences) Among which, those of the Prophet Habbakuc will certainly have their share*; Wo to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power

Power of evil. Thou haſt conſulted ſhame to thy houſe, by cutting off many people, and haſt ſinned againſt thy ſoul. For the ſtone ſhall cry out of the wall, and the Beam out of the Timber ſhall anſwer it. Wo unto him that buildeth a Town with blood, and ſtabliſheth a City by iniquity. They that will be rich, *will as certainly* fal into Temptation, and a ſnare, and into many fooliſh and hurtful luſts, which drown men in deſtruction and perdition. 1 Tim. 6. 9. *And they that love to fiſh in troubled waters, or trouble the waters that they may fiſh for profit, ſeldom think of the malignity of thoſe Curſes, that are wrapt up in their ill gotten wealth*; The wealth is winged, and will ſoon take its flight, Prov. 23. 5. *But the curſes are of a longer durance, and ſtay behind. That which was a ſnare to the ſoul in the acquiſition, is very likely to prove a curſe to the family in the deſignation.* It is a ſnare (ſaith Solomon) to the man, who devoureth that which is holy, and after vows to make enquiry. *Alas (my dear friends) what comfort can you take on your death beds, in bequeathing*

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things unto friends or posterity, that stand before your trembling eys, but as so many witnesses and remembrancers of guilt and iniquity? with what comfort or Conscience can you dispose of your Estates, when you know not what to do with your immortal souls? how is it possible you should set your house in order, when your better part (your mind, which should do it) is in the greatest disorder and distraction? when all that you have grasped by the hand of Power and oppression, shall not be able (in the least measure) to release you of the horror and amasement wherewith your mercenary souls will be surprised. Therefore if any accursed gain stick to your fingers, my advice is very short, but withal safe, and I hope, not unseasonable; Make to your selves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousnes, that when ye fail, ye may be received into everlasting habitations. Matth. 16. 9.

The last objection I foresee, is very general, and very desperate, and runs parallel with that of Cain and Judas; Mine iniquity is greater then can be forgiven. *'Tis true indeed, if you set your selves before the*

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glass of Gods Law, and look upon your selves with an impartial ey (as God looks on you) you have reason enough to be highly displeased with your uglines's and deformity. Or if you suffer your actions to be scanned and tryed by the Municipal Laws you were born under, which are the best security you have for any propriety, you cannot but discern your Persons and Estates (in justice) to lie at the mercy of Confiscation and Censure. But yet, for you to stand so much in your own light, as to turn your backs upon all offers of Grace and Mercy, and to prefer your own guilty fears before your Princes favour, is to add more weight to the afflictions of your injured Soveraign. To conclude him severe, because you are pre-resolv'd not to tast of his benignity, is an high breach of Charity and Gratitude; But to say within your selves, Nolumus hunc regnare, *for no other reason, but because you adhere to those who killed his servants, murdered his royal Father, and seized on his inheritance, is cleerly and undoubtedly to rebel, not only against his Prerogative (the means of your Protection) but against the Gospel it self,*

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the means of your salvation; and instead of giving God and Cesar their due; you do at once deny King and your Christ together.

I rather wish and pray, that you may learn of Benhadads servants, a safer way to peace and reconciliation; Behold (*say those heathens*) we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel are merciful kings; *and therefore they resolve to address themselves to the king in a posture of humiliation. And so will you (I hope) if you are not bewitch'd into your own ruine. You have a merciful king to deal withal; one, who is* bone of your bone, and flesh of your flesh; *One, in whom the heroick spirit of his Grandfather Henry 4th of France; the peaceable mind of his Grandfather K. James, and the merciful inclinations of his martyr'd father, do all concur to make up an incomparable king: who (when we are tyred and jaded with disputes) must at last be trusted, or can be no king; and is not in a capacity to shew mercy, till he hath power to do otherwise. For,* where the word of a King is, there is power, *saith Solomon; and without that power, mercy is not mercy, but servile and slavish compliance.* So

So that if there were nothing to be alledged in defence of the Regal power, or in demand of the Subjects duty, yet judge within your selves whether it is better for you that all the sons of Jerubbaal (*which are more then* 70. raign over you; *or else, that the natural head be restored to the body, for the preservation and restauration of our languishing gasping Church & State? Whether it be better to return to our former Laws and Government, or remain under a perpetual fluctuation of Arbytrarie Power, which rowls from one faction to another, & the wisest among us cannot imagine where it will settle? Whether one form of doctrine and Discipline, or a thousand Heresies and Schisms be the better Religion? Whether one King or fifty Colonels is like to produce the more safe and quiet Government?*

It is said of some who adhered to Saul (*who was none of the best kings*) *that* they were a band of men whose hearts God had touched; *but for those that despised him, and brought him no presents, they are branded with the name of* children of Belial. *And in another place, we read of a fierce*

fierce contestation between the men of Israel, and the men of Judah, who should express the greatest zeal in bringing the king to his royal Throne; oh, that it might please the God of Peace and Order, to close all our unnatural and bloody differences in such a sweet emulation and agreement, that the last contestation among us, might be that of outvying one another in the seasonable expressions of duty and allegiance; that our Absoloms, and Sheba's, and Achitophels, & which are worse then these, our sins, being suppress; we would be as zealous and active in restoring the Throne of Gods Anointed, as we have been fatal and unfortunate in the demolishing of it; without which I fear the youngest amongst us will never live to see the settlement of Truth and Peace upon any firm and assured foundation. And though his Majesties present condition will not enable him to give you fields and vinyards, and to make you Captains of thousands, and of hundreds; *yet the villany of these times hath not stript him of all power and capacity to reward; for he hath a reward of Pardon, for such as shall submit themselves,*

themſelves, and return to their allegiance; which perhaps, may be worth the looking after once in ſeven yeers, as things may fall out. And he hath a reward of Bounty and Benignity, a reward of Merit, for ſuch as ſhall act remarkably in his ſervice; which if any man believe not, I ſhall ſuſpect him haunted and purſued into a deſpair of mercy, by the clamouring horrors of his own guilty Conſcience. And when any of you (my Pariſhioners) ſhall deſire to make tryal of, I doubt not but I am ſo well underſtood at Court, as to procure you an experiment of the Kings mercy, whenſoever you ſhall look after it in the way of duty and allegiance. But if you ſhall ſay, That all is well done which hath been done of late yeers; that the foundation of thoſe glorious days which ſome of you dream of, is well & ſafely laid in Perjury and Sacriledge, and the blood of your Soveraign, that you cannot, nor will not deny the right hand of fellowſhip and aſſiſtance to thoſe whom you take to be the Patriots and Protectors of your new form'd Commonwealth. And that I might very well have ſpared my pains in diſ-

disquieting your thoughts with strange doctrines, hard sayings, and sad reflections on what is past; being resolved aforehand, not to be diverted out of the way you are in. To such, I have no more to say, but to signifie my grief and sorrow of heart, for the strong Delusion and Infatuation wherein they are involved; My soul shall weep in secret for them; and God forbid I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for them, *while they are on this side the grave; only thus much I would beg of them for charity and christianity sake; that no prejudice or byassed respect whatsoever, may alienate their hearts from me their Minister, or divert their eys from looking upon this following Treatise, which (for the doctrinal part) I dare avouch to be no other then a sincere extract of sacred Scripture (what black mark soever may be set upon it by those who now sit at stern) which I have published, meerly out of tenderness to those many thousands in my Parish, who in times of tryal have not known their right hand from their left, nor the right way from the wrong; and not without some se-*

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cret hopes (under the mercy of the most high) to recover some of those many, who I fear, are yet in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity; wherein, if I have been over bold or severe in any expressions, I have been instructed into this roughness by my Saviours example, who was never so invective against any, as the Scribes, Pharises, and Hypocrites of that age. And truly my reprehensions have not been so sharp & pressing out of any other satisfaction, but to shew you your own guilt in order to your repentance and conversion. Those diseases which fester inwardly, require a faithful, though rough hand to search them; men that are fallen into a deep sleep, must have loud cries to awaken them, and a rude hand may very well be born withal, to recover a man that is fallen into a swooning fit. And for those of my own Coat, if I have dealt unseemly with them, in discovering the nakedness of the spiritual Parent; let them know, I have borrowed this sharpness from S. Paul, who, as he was a person of extraordinary meeknes and condescention where he met with weak brethren, as appears by

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the Circumcision of Timothy, and his own character of himself, in being all things unto all men, that by all means he might save some; *So there were three sorts of persons with whom he would never twist and comply, namely, proud, ambitious, and aspiring persons, such as loved to have the preheminence in all things, of whom he forewarns Timothy.* 2. *Covetous persons,* who subverted whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, only for filthy lucres sake. 3. *Cowards and dissemblers in Religion, such as durst not profess Christ for fear of persecution; Truly, I shall ever declare an averseness to quarrel with any of my fellow labourers, neither do I (from my present low condition) envie them in any of their Promotions; I love their Persons, but I hate from my soul those foul & scandalous sins of Pride, Cowardise, and Covetousness, which have rendred them both at home and abroad so odious and unevangelical. I wish they may ever have before their eys, the grand consideration of a watchmans charge, who is to be faithful in his warning, and constant to his station in*

all

all weathers; otherwise the people may perish in their sins (for the merit of their iniquity) but their blood will be required at their hands.

And now I beseech you, my dear friends, and Parishioners, to entertain these poor labours of mine, as they are sent to you, from the tender bowels of your spiritual shepherd, which may be followed with more, according to the candour and benignity of their reception. What may be the consequent of this my adventure, as to my self, I know not, I have tasted of the house of Jonadab (the prison) for your sakes already; which may be prosecuted (for ought I know) with perpetual banishment out of a ruinated Vinyard, wherein there is such a visible want of faithful labourers, as a sutable addition to the injuries and extremities I have endured for these last seven yeers. I have sate down and considered the extent of human power and malice; and God hath made me a fenced brazen wall, as once he did his Prophet Jeremy, nor shall I think my self a loser by this piece of devotion, should it be written with my own blood, provided I may

be offer'd up on the sacrifice and service of your faith *and conversion, accounting it a most fatal & accursed choise, to hazard so many thousand souls, for the saving of a single fortune, or a bubble life. And if I never return to my own Country and Cure, to Preach the Gospel, as I ought to speak, Gods will be done; 'twill be a fixed comfort both in life and death, that I have discharged my self to you in the fidelity of a spiritual watchman; so that having nothing else wherin to express my care of you, my friends, and my charity to my enemies and oppressors; I thought it agreeable to Christian duty, to recommend these Papers, which I shall follow with my Prayers:*

That the God of all grace, and Father of lights, would give you a sight of the error of your doings in these irregular and rebellious times; and withal give you grace to turn away from it, that you may return to him by true repentance; and to your Soveraign Lord, the *King*, by true faith and allegiance; that God may return in mercy to you, and divert those heavie judgements which seem to gather like a black cloud over you; and clense your souls of all presumptuous sins, and guide your feet into the way of Peace; Thus Prays

Your affectionate friend and servant in Christ, W. Stampe.

Isaiah 6. 9. 10. 11. 12.

9. *Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not: and see ye indeed, but perceive not.*
10. *Make the heart of this people fat, and make their eares heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their eares, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.*
11. *Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, untill the Cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate.*
12. *And the Lord have removed men farre away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the Land.*

GOD, *at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the Fathers by the Prophets.* Heb. 1. 1. Somtimes *viva voce*, by his own immediate audible voice, as Exo. 19. 19. Somtimes by Consultations, by *Vrim*, according as was directed Numb 27. 21. Somtimes by manifesting

his will and pleasure in a dream, as to *Pharaoh*, and to *Joseph* the Patriarch Gen. 41. Sometimes by visions, as here in this Chapter. The whole *Prophesie* in general, is called *the vision of Isaiah the Son of Amoz*. (*a*) and this in the *Text* is like *Ezechiels wheel within a wheel*, (*b*) a vision within a vision.

(*a*) Isa. 1. 1.

(*b*) Eze. 1. 16.

These words of the *Prophet* are of a very sad and gloomy aspect; as full of threatning, as these times wherein we live; and let this be observed from them in general, That there is not in the whole booke of God a Text that *Christ* and his *Apostles* made so much use of for the convincement of obstinate and rebellious *Hypocrites*, as this of this *Prophet Isaiah*: So that however it may seeme to be an old, stale, obsolete threatning, directed only unto the *Jews* many hundred yeers ago; yet if we consult the Evangelical History, we shall find it owned and adopted by *Christ*, and by *S. Paul*, as well when he preach'd to the Saints at *Rome*, as when he wrote unto them *Romans* from *Corinthus*: (*a*) nay originally to be the language of *Christ* himself, and dictated unto this *Prophet* long before his incarnation, as will appear if we look well upon the

(*a*) Mat. 13. 14. Mark. 4. 12. Luke 8. 10.

of John 12.41. *These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.* That is, *spake of him* prophetically; and *saw his glory* (as S. Stephen did (*b*) 26.) as the glory of the eternal Son of God. So that I could have taken my Text out of either of the Evangelists, (*b*) Act. out of the Acts of the Apostles, or the Epistle to the Romans, as well as out of this Prophet, (but that I desired to fetch my water as neer the spring head as might be); It is but the language of the same holy Spirit in all these; and sure, the holy Ghost hath fixed a particular mark of observation upon that Text; which he hath so frequently recorded, and inserted in the Sacred volume.

Ioh. 12. 41. Acts 28. Rom. 11. 8. 7.55.

To this may be added, the near Relation and Correspondency between the Text and these times; what was then but in *minis*, is with us in *pœnis*. Isaiah's threatnings unto Israel, are Gods visible executions in England. (To say nothing of the admirable State and Majesty, wherein God appeared, when he delivered this Message to his Prophet; not much inferiour to that which was observed in the promulgation of the Law; as appears v. 1. 2. 3. 4.) 'tis enough to startle, and awaken us, that it is,

First, Of Judgement; not of Mercy and Judgement, as once the Psalmist sung. (a) But solely, and entirely of Judgement, nor a syllabe of mercy that I can find in it; a sad (I confesse) but no unsafe *Theam*, to awe and regulate a man into obedience and submission; The *Gospel* it self stands surest upon this foundation, and the seed of Gods word never thrives and prospers so well, as where the furrows have been made by the terrors of the *Law*.

(a) Psal. 101.1.

Secondly, Of Judgement, not upon the Nations of the earth at large, upon *Edom*, or *Moab*, or *Egypt*, or *Caldea*; (which elsewhere have their several burdens denounced, and by this Prophet too) but here the sad message is directed unto *Judah*, the most selected Tribe of all his own people, a people that God had ever dandled upon the lap of his mercy, and distinguished from all the world by his visible care and protection over them. Go and tell *This people*, &c. and *if Judgement begin at Judah, at the house of God, what shall be the end of those that obey not the Gospel of God?* 1. Pet. 4. 17.

Thirdly, The Judgement here threatned is not like those which were once pro-

propounded by *God* to *Davids* choise; (*a*) a Judgement of a day, or a moneth, or a yeer; but a more lasting Iudgement, which was not to be removed, *till the Cities were wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the Land were utterly desolate.* vers. 11. (*a*) 2. Sam. 24. 13.

Fourthly, With the Continuance, we have here a very dangerous Quality in the Iudgement; A Iudgement not of blasting, or mildew upon the fields or of murrain upon the flocks; not upon the goodly pillars of the land, Religion, and Iudicature, by removing them out of their places, not upon the person of their King, *(the joy of their hearts, and the breath of their nostrils)* (*a*) all which, are sore and heavie Iudgements; but a judgement beyond all these, *a judgement upon the Heart*; Infatuation of Mind; A judgement that hath no sense of judgement; *Make the heart of his people fat*, &c. There is no plague like unto that of the heart. (*a*) Lam. 4. 20.

Fiftly, This infatuation is made by *Prophets*, partly by *false Prophets*; (namely) by the seduction of their false and byassed visions, and partly, by *true Prophets*; namely by the hardning power of the divine *Oracles*, on those, that rebel against the convincement of that sacred light.

And lastly. We may observe the *Time*, when this sad message was delivered to the Prophet, and by him denounced unto the people; and that was, *In the same yeer that good King Vzziah died*, v. 1. A King, that had deserved well of his people, and of whose government none had cause to complain, unlesse it were the *Priest* in one particular; which is more then our *Clergy* could complain of in all the raign of our blessed *Hezekiah*, who fell not so much the *peoples* martyr, as the *Priests*.

In all which particulars, the Vision of *Isaiah* is so visible a character of these times, that any man that is not involved in this Judgement of Infatuation, may run and read it: Which I mention for no other end, but to alarum and awake the senslesse and secure of our Age and Nation, who never think themselves in danger, till they are surprized past all recovery; and like men in a Consumption, never think themselves sick, till they find themselves dead.

The Text is a *Commission* given from the mouth of God himself; *Go, and tell this people*, &c. wherein we have two general parts,

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1. A prepatative to Iudgement, *Make the heart of this people fat*; A Reſemblance borrowed from ſuch as feed cattel, not for ſtore, or ſervice, but only for the ſlaughtering ſhambles.

2. The Iudgement it ſelf, and that is of ſeverall kinds.
   1. *Devaſtation* and *Deſolation*, and that generall, v. 11.
   2. *Baniſhment*, and *Deſertion*, v. 12.

All this was threatned many yeers before it was executed, as a means of grace held our unto the people, to prevent the dreadful executions of Gods Iuſtice upon them; And ſo it is intended by me, to prevent (if poſſible) the remainder of Iudgement, not yet executed upon our ſinful Land and Nation.

But before I proceed to my main intendment, it will not be amiſs (by way of Preface or Introduction) to touch a little upon ſuch general obſervations as do naturally ariſe from theſe words of the Prophet; wherein we ſhall find great variety of conſiderable matter; as firſt, from the Prophets Commiſſion [*Go, and tell this people*, &c.] we have this clear Truth hinted unto us.

1. *That Spiritual Ambaſſadors, are* Obſ. 1.

to receive both their busines and instructions how to proceed in their errand and Embassy, only from God. The Prophets of old time spake as they were inspired; (a) 2 Pet. 1. 21. (a) *S. Paul delivered to the Corinthians,* no other Doctrine, or Tradition, *then what he received of the Lord;* (b) 1 Cor. 11 23. and if he should have done otherwise for any humane itch or satisfaction, *he could not have been the servant of Christ.* Gal. 1. 10. So that if any man speak as from Christ, *Let him speak as the Oracles of God.* (c) 1 Pet. 4. 11. Divinity is of a sublimer nature then to incorporate with secular and particular ends and ayms; like Quicksilver, that will not mix with any inferiour nature. Gods Truth must not be formed like *Nebuchadnezzars Image, partly of Iron, and partly of Clay.* (d) Dan. 2. 33. 'Tis a foul scandal to Religion, when Doctrines savour not so much of the *Bible*, as the *Diurnal*; when the pulpit is made the servant, or rather slave to Policy, and the Preachers Sermon awed into a Narrative or Declaration.

Secondly, The Prophet is commanded both *to Go, and speak*, &c, though he were secretly assured afore hand from the provision of God, that his message should have no other effect upon

upon the people, more then to make them more obstinate and obdurate. From whence it is evident in the second place, that

God will have his Ministers discharge themselves in the duty of their places, what ever the success be. The obstinacy or malice of the people, must not hinder or deter the Prophet in the delivery of Gods Message. *Son of man* (saith God to his Prophet Ezekiel) *I send thee to a rebellious Nation, but be not afraid of them, nor of their words; though briers, and thorns be with thee, and thou doest dwell among Scorpions; & Thou shalt speak my words unto them; whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear; for they are most rebellious.* Ezek. 2. 3. 6. 7. And S *Paul*, who was not ignorant that the Gospel of Christ would certainly prove a *stumbling block*, and a *rock of offence* to many in *Israel*; and that his own sermons, would prove a savour of death unto death, unto many of his Auditors, doth yet declare a dreadful wo to be his portion, if he did not preach the Gospel of Christ. (*a*) The Ministers of the Gospel, how ever vilified, abused, and reputed as the off scouring of the world, are equally and indifferently a *sweet* Obs. 2. (*a*) 1. Cor. 9. 16.

Savour of Christ unto God, as well in those that perish, as in those that are saved. (b) God doth not proportion the reward of his servants according to success and event; what ever the harvest prove, whether wheat, or tares, *Our labour shall not bee in vain in the Lord.* 1. Cor. 15. 58.

(b) 2. Cor. 2. 15.

Thirdly, *Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.* Here was hearing, but no understanding; and seeing, but no perception; Hearing, and not hearing; Seeing, and not seeing. The sense and meaning whereof I take to be this. Since by your wilful and constant opposing of my word, you have most justly provoked me to withdraw my spirit, whereby it might have been effectual unto your Conversion; hereafter, I will not send my word unto you, to convert and save you, but to convince and condemn you, the sound whereof hereafter, shall but astonish you, and the glorious rayes of its light shall be of no other use unto you, but to dazle your eyes into a greater degree of Blindnesse; from whence it is evident in the third place, that.

Obs. 3. *It is not barely the Hearing of Gods word, but the gracious disposition of the heart*

heart, to be guided and governed by it, that makes it effectual unto regeneration. S. *Paul* ſpeaks of one that may *give all his goods to feed the poor, and yet have no charity.* 1. Cor. 13. 3 S. *James* makes mention of a great *Hearer*, and a ſmall *Doer*. Iam. 1. 23. A man may have Angelical knowledge, without Evangelical faith and ſincerity. There is a great deale of difference between Hearing, and Hearing; between S *Stephens Hearers*, and S *Peters Hearers*; In both the word *was quick, and powerful, piercing even to the dividing aſunder of ſoul and ſpirit* (a) But with this difference; S. *Peters* Hearers were ſaid to be *pricked in their hearts*; and the conſequent of that, was an humble and entire reſignation of themſelves to be governed by the Preacher and his Doctrine: as appears Act 2. 37. *Men, and Brethren, what ſhall we do*, &c. S. *Stephens* Hearers were alſo cut to the heart, but they were not penetrated; for the conſequent of their Hearing, was the ſtoning and murthering of their Preacher. Firſt *they gnaſhed on him with their teeth*, and afterwards *caſt him out of the City*, and *ſtoned him*; as appears Act 7. 54. From whence it is evident in the fourth place: that,

(a) Heb. 4. 12.

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Obs.4. *The means of grace, when they are vilified and oppoſed, become the greater means of ſin and Condemnation.* This is very clear in the caſe and condition of *Chorazin*, *Bethſaida*, and *Capernaum*, according to our Saviours own doctrine and determination. Mat. 11, 22, 24. The great meaſure of light the Scribes and Phariſees ſo confidently boaſted of, ſerved for no other purpoſe, but to be an aggravation of their wilful blindneſſe: *If ye were blind* (ſaith our Saviour of thoſe Hypocrites) *ye ſhould have no ſin* (not no ſin ſimply, but no ſin ſo wilful and inexcuſable) *but now ye ſay we ſee; therefore your ſin remaineth*; Ioh. 9. 41. Theſe I take to be the natural doctrines obſervable in the firſt verſe of my Text.

The ſecond preſents us with three more, the firſt whereof is this.

Obs.5. That *Spiritual Infatuation is ordinarily the harbinger and forerunner of Iudgement.* It is given ſometimes to ſtanders by, to diſcern not only the certainty, but the neerneſs and propinquity of Iudgement, from the ſenſleſneſs and ſtupidity of thoſe who are moſt concerned in it. Firſt *make the heart of this people fat*, &c. and then, let *their Cities be deſolate*, &c. This is Gods method

in

in punishing, and it concerns us to look to it.

The second is this: *When God denounceth Judgement against a people, if they were not infatuated, they would certainly repent, and be converted unto God.* The charm of Infatuation is so powerful and bewitching, that could some men know precisely the time of the Bridegrooms coming, yet they would not be provided of oyl in their lamps; and if Moses, and the Prophets, prevail not with them, neither will they be perswaded, though one should rise from the dead. Luc. 6. 31. Obs. 7.

The third is this: That *Repentance and Conversion unto God, is a certain and infallible expedient for the reversing, and removing of his Judgements.* This I gather by that limitation and exception, *Lest they should see with their eys, and hear, &c. and convert, and he healed.* We may guess at the power of a sincere Conversion unto God, by an Indulgence granted unto *Ahab*, only for his formal and external humiliation; which (indeed) would not hold weight in the ballance of sincerity, and yet had power to suspend a Judgement till his sons days: as appears, 1. King. 21. 29. *Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself? because he*

he humbleth himself; therefore I will not bring the evil in his days, but in his sons days.

The devastation of *Ierusalem* by *Titus* the Roman Emperour, was foretold many hundred yeers before it was executed; and yet observe how our Saviour bespeaks that bloody City. *If thou hadst known at least in this thy day,* &c. Luc. 19. 42. 'Tis the ey-water of Repentance, that alone hath power to extinguish the flames of Gods wrathful indignation; and see how passionately God complains when he cannot gain this reasonable atonement on our part; *O that my people would have harkned unto me, for if Israel would have walked in my ways, I should soon have put down their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries,* &c. Psal. 81. 13. 14.

In the third verse, we find the Prophet interposing, and as it were, standing in the gap between God, and his people, with a question full of tenderness and compassion. *Usque quo Domine?* Lord how long shall this Calamity be upon thy people? Where, from the Prophets question, we have this observation.

[Obs. 8.] That, *in times of Judgement and extreme*

treme Calamity, it belongs especially unto those whose function renders them nearer unto God then other men; to mediate and intercede between God and his people, as being many times most powerfull with God, when but vile, and contemptible in the eys of men. Thus faithful *Abraham* intercedes for wicked Sodom and Gomorrah, not by one question (as here the Prophet Esay) but by six several addresses and proposals; by which he had brought it to this favourable issue, that if but ten righteous persons had been found therein, the Iudgement had been reversed, and those Cities spared. Gen 18. 32. Thus was *Moses* in the gap, to stop the incursions of Gods wrath upon his people; In one place, he seems to lay hold on Gods hand, by a holy Violence, insomuch that God seems to intreat for the use of his arm for the vindicating of his honour upon a Stubborn and rebellious Generation, in the language of a Supplicant. Let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot; and that I may consume them, &c. Exod. 32. 10. And in the same chapter, he intercedes for the people with so great earnestness, as if the zeal for their preservation had eaten out the care of his own eternal condition; his language seems

seems to import no less, v. 32. And now, if thou wilt, forgive their sin; and if not; blot me I pray thee out of the book which thou hast written.

And the Prophet *Samuel*, who (to his grief) lived to be a witness of many daring provocations in his time, would notwithstanding never cease to be their Advocate; *God forbid* (saith he) *that I should sin against the Lord, in ceasing to pray for you.* 1. Sam. 12. 23. Nothing but the Prophet Ieremies express inhibition (*pray not for this people*) (*a*) ought to abate the strength of a Prophets devotion and intercession for Gods people in the time of their extremity.

(*a*) Ier. 7. 16.

Lastly from Gods answer, we have three remarkables of sad and serious observation: The first is this.

Obs. 9. That the patience and long suffering of Gods mercy, doth neither abate nor divert the proceedings of his Iustice. God is not as man, that threatens many times far beyond his intendments; though his hand be lifted up, and his sword brandished a long time before he strike, yet when he does strike, he strikes home. There be spirits, that are created for vengeance, which in their fury lay on sore strokes, in the time of destruction they pour out their forces, and appease

peaſe the wrath of him that made them. Eccleſ 39.28. And though that be Apocryphal, I'm ſure this is not, *God will wound the head of his Enemies, and the hairy ſcalp of every one that goeth on ſtill in his wickedneſs.* Pſal. 68.21. The longer his bow lies unbent, the ſtronger will the draught be, whenſoever he ſhal take it into his hand. The deluge upon the old world was ſuſpended an hundred and twenty yeers, but when it came, it ſwept clean; but eight perſons preſerved in that univerſal deſtruction. So the Judgement in the Text was ſuſpended for many Generations, but when the day of Gods viſitation came, it proved a ſweeping Iudgement; a beſom of deſtruction, was employed to make clean work. The Cities to be waſted without inhabitant, and the houſes without man, and the Land to be utterly deſolate, or as it is in the original (ſignified in the margent) Deſolate with deſolatio-. Gen. 6.3.

Secondly, We are here to obſerve; That Gods Judgements are neither all of a ſize, nor all of a ſort. Here is Deſolation at home, and Banithment abroad, and Gods forſaking, which is worſe then either; Fear, and the pit, and the ſnare are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth, ſaith Obſ. 10. Eſa. 24. 17, 18.

saith this Prophet in another place: and it shall come to pass, that he who fleeth from the noise of the fear, shall fall into the pit, and he that cometh out of the pit, shall be taken in the snare. The meaning is, that God will never want a plague to find out those, that find out ways to provoke the eys of his glory. But admit there be certain desolation in Iudea, may not the Iews take shelter in Egypt? No, The Prophet shews them the consequent of that fruitless designe, Isa.30. They shall carry their riches, and their treasures upon the bunches of Camels, to a people that shal not profit them; for the Egyptians shall help in vain, and to no purpose. Egypt hath been a sufficient instance of Gods prosecuting one Iudgement with another, for the manifestation of his power, and wrath upon that King, and people.

God hath his quiver full of arrows, the magazine of his Iudgements is inexhaustible. What a black roll of Iudgements do we read of Levit.26. and Deut.26. and though we might suppose the spirit of a man able to undergo all that is there threatned: yet there is mention made of *unwritten plagues*; So that, what S. *Paul* speaks of the prepara-

Deut. 28, 61.

tions

parations of Iuſtice; Ey hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither hath entred into the heart of man, what God hath prepar'd, as well of woe, for thoſe that hate, as of bleſſedneſs, for thoſe that love him. There is no avoiding the Divine wrath, but by patience, and ſubmiſſion, and an humble acceptation of the puniſhment of their iniquity. (a) So that *Cælum, non animum, mutat non vindictam Divinam.* For alas, what comfort can it be unto *Cain* to have his life allowed him, and to ſpin it out in a fugitive condition, with a burthen of horror upon him, greater then he is able to bear? What pleaſure can a man take to live upon Earth, with Hell in his boſome? What ſatisfaction to be taken, in forſaking our Country, whilſt the not forſaking of our ſins, gives us too much cauſe to ſuſpect we are forſaken of God? Which leads me to the laſt general obſervation of the Text: and it is this. (a) Lev. 26. 43.

That when a people are ſo wilfully wedded to their own rebellious ways, that they are neither warned by Gods word, nor won by his mercies, nor reclaimed by his Iudgements; God will certainly forſake that people; which is the higheſt expreſſion of his ſeverity Obſ. 11.

and

and justice. In the book of the Revelation, we have represented unto us by way of vision, many dreadful executions of Gods wrath, intimated unto us by the Sounding of several Trumpets, the opening of several Seals, the pouring out of several Vialls, &c. and then after all this (as a sad preparative to the grand account, which every man must give at the Tribunal of Iudgement) we read of this fatal and final determination, He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still; Rev. 22. 11. (that is) He that will not be reclaimed by any gracious application; shall be left impenetrable to his own ruine, and destruction. It was a sore, and a grievous servitude which the Israelites sustained under the unreasonable, and (indeed) impossible commands of Pharaoh and his Officers, for 400. yeers together; and it is very probable that *Iacob* understood what would befal his posterity in Egypt, long before he went down thither, God having communicated the same to his Grandfather *Abraham*, as appears Gen. 15 13. Know of a surety, that thy seed shall be a stranger in a Land that is not theirs, and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them 400. yeers. And yet

Iacob

Iacob is commanded to lay aside all fear of going down into Egypt, notwithstanding this prediction; and the reason is, because God promised to go along with him; as appears Gen. 46.34. The promise of Gods presence extinguisheth the fear of 400. yeers certain Affliction. And when upon an high provocation, God threatned the same people to withdraw his presence, and to substitute an Angel in his room for their conduct into Canaan, see with what bitterness of spirit they entertain the message; Tis said, that *when the people heard these tidings; They mourned, and no man did put on his ornaments*, Exod. 33. 4. How far we have forfeited the conduct of a gracious God in our former designes and engagements, I take no pleasure to remember. 'Tis well if (together with our possessions and estates, and many other blessings) we have not lost the favour of the Donor also; Sure I am, The safety and preservation of a people, of a City, of a soul, consists intirely and immediatly in the gracious presence of Almighty God; And it is most certain, That God never forsakes a people, till they first forsake him; Isa. 50. 1. and as certain, that when a people forsake their God, God will

also

also forsake and estrange himself from that people. 2. Chron 15. 2. So that, when it comes to this fatal Breach and Divorcement; that God begins to withdraw from his Sanctuary (the place where he had fixed the marks of his favour in his Name and Worship, when he is so highly provoked, as to hate, where he loved, in so much that he cannot look upon his people with any pleasing aspect, nor speak unto them, but in thunder and lightning, nor call them by that ancient name of favour (a) by which he had distinguished them from all the world; But when Israel (that is) a people prevailing with God, shall be turned into *Loammi*, Not the people of God; into *Lorhamah*, a people that hath not obtained mercy When that of the Prophet Jeremy shall be fulfilled; I have forsaken mine house, I have left mine Heritage, I have given the dearly beloved of my soul into the hands of her Enemies; Jer. 12.7. Then every thing shall twist and conspire to the ruine and destruction of that people.

(a) Israel.

Gen. 32. 28, Hos. 1. 6. 9.

The Schoolmen distinguishing of *pœna Sensus*, and *pœna Damni*; conclude the loss of heaven, and the want of Gods presence, a far heavier judgement then the

the pains of Hell, sustained in everlasting chains of darkness. And the reason is, because the memory and contemplation of a better, doubleth the misery of a worse estate, and condition. Sure I am, the Scripture evidently concludes Apostacy of far nearer relation and alliance to the bottomless pit, then Atheisme: and that it had been better men had never known the way of righteousness, then after the knowledge, Taste and Experience of that way of life, to turn away, and forsake it, beginning in the Spirit and concluding in the flesh. For if we sin wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the Truth; there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin; but a certain fearful looking for of Iudgement, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. Heb. 10. 26. 27. 2. Pet. 2. 21.

The sum of all these general Considerations, is but this; Whensoever God forsakes a people, he leaves them infatuated and betwitch'd to their own ruine and destruction; and whensoever a people is so far infatuated; their hearts so fat, their ears so heavie, their eyes so wilfully shut, that they will neither discern the threatnings of an angry God, not be awakened by the visible executions

tions of his Iudgements; It is an evident token, that God hath forsaken them. So that whether we take Spiritual Infatuation for the procuring Cause of Desolation and misery; or for the Effect of Gods Iustice upon the heart of a people forsaken of him, or for the signe and Symptom of his certain visitation, we are to look upon it as a fatal Iudgement upon the soul, where ere we find it.

Quos perdere vult Deus, dementat prius

Application. Not to dismisse these generals without some short Application. You have heard your Prophet, and seen his Commission. Only the Scene is changed. What was threatned unto Iudea, hath been the dismal Tragedy in England. Desolation and Devastation at home: Banishment, and I fear, too general a Desertion of us that are abroad. God hath spent a whole quiver of his arrows, poured out a whole volley of his Iudgements, neither unlike, nor inferiour to the Egyptian plagues. He hath smitten us in the increase of the earth, by blasting and mildews; insomuch, that we may take up the Prophet Isaiah's complaint, that

Isai. 5. 10. an *Omer of seed hath not* (in many places) *yeilded an Ephah of fruit*; (that is) not the tenth part of what was sown and

and our Land, which was wont to be a lender unto other Nations, hath been curſed into a blaſted and borrowing condition: He hath ſmitten us in our flocks and herds, by a ſtrange kind of murrain and rottenneſs in all ſorts of Cattel. He hath ſmitten us in our purſes, by reducing us unto extreme penury; and ſmitten us in our poſterity, by cutting off our yong men with the ſword. How hath the ſtorm of war (like an Egyptian Hail) broken down our goodly Cedar trees? How have the people been eaten up by Locuſts, and Caterpillers, and all manner of Egyptian Vermine? What ſwarms of frogs (from the bottomleſs pit,) have crept into our houſes, croking out their own frauds, and pernicious fallacies, to the ſeduction of men, and women, laden with ſins, led about with divers luſts? What palpable (and more then Egyptian) darkneſs hath followed hereupon in all places? and ſure, if our waters have not been turned into blood; our earth hath been miſerably drenched and ſoaked with *Chriſtian*, *Proteſtant*, *Engliſh*, *Noble*, *Royall* blood; and (which is beyond all this.) The plague of Pharaohs impenitent and obdurate Spirit, hath ſo far ſeized upon our ſouls, that though we are brought into the red ſea of affli- 2. Tim. 3. 6.

ction, and surrounded on every side with hovering destruction, yet we have not
Isa. 9. 13. in all this time, returned unto him that hath smitten us. Me-thinks I hear the God of the Spirits of all flesh complain of us, as once he did of his own people Israel; Why should ye be stricken any more? Ye will revolt more, and more; the whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint; from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head, there is no soundness, but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores; and therefore your Country is desolate, and your City burnt with fire, &c. Isa. 1. 5. 6. 7.

And certainly, our recovery out of this fatal Distemper, belongs alone to the Redeemer of our Israel; for the wisest of men cannot discern by any humane perspective, how it should be effected. 'Tis only the great Generalissimo of heaven, and earth, that maketh
Psal. 46. 9. wars to cease in all the world, and maketh men in an house to be of one mind; That breaketh down, and buildeth up; that moveth a Land, and divideth it; and at another time, healeth the sores, and fastneth the pillars thereof; and delivereth Israel out of all his troubles. What secular arm he will use in this work whensoever his mercy shall take it in hand; or who shall live to see our

breaches

breaches repaired, and our preſent rubbiſh chang'd into the ſtructure of a (more then pretended) reformation; I know not. The Scripture tells us, that of thoſe many thouſands to whom the good Land of Canaan was promiſed, two only ſurvived to be inveſted in the poſſeſſion, all the reſt were cut off in the wilderneſs, by the iniquity of their own ſinful provocations. Sure I am, that God in his own time will bring the way of every wilful tranſgreſſor upon his own head; and the crying raigning ſins of our Land, are (many of them) ſuch as go aforehand to Iudgement, (that is,) ſuch as ſhall certainly find the ſevere hand of God in their puniſhment on this ſide the grave: but I am not ſure; that God will puniſh Hypocrites, by Atheiſts; or honour thoſe with the glorious employment of ſuppreſſing Rebels and Regicides; who themſelves refuſe to have him raign over them, and re-crucifie their Redeemer daily, by a perpetual backſliding. Our Enemies have thriv'd and proſpered hitherto, ſo otherwiſe then Leeks and Sparagus, by the dung and putrifaction of our ſinfulneſs. Let us but withdraw this abominable contribution of our ſuperfluity of naughtineſs, and I dare be your Prophet; you ſhall ſee your Enemies power

1. Tim. 24.

wither like grass upon the house top; and their persons grow as contemptible, as dung upon the earth. To effect these our greedy desires, the ways of Policy and divided Applications to divers parties and factions, is very intricate, unsafe, and hard to hit. The ways of true Honour, Religion, and Iustice, are far more easie, successful, and assured. But no expedient (for the healing of a Land wasted with wo, and misery) like unto that of the Text, (Repentance and a sincere Conversion unto God.) Let this be done first, and in all our difficulties, God will not be wanting to us in the safe conduct of his Holy Spirit. The truth is, most wounds will heal and close of themselves, if they may be but kept from filth and putrifaction; and the main of our Cure lies in *Naamans Prescription*; and is of no more difficulty, but *to wash, and be clean.*

Oh then, let your *Prayers*, and *Tears*, and improved *Conversations*, be now more fortunate and successful in the service of your *Soveraign*: then all your former riotousness and debauchery hath been fruitful only in mischiefs, and miscaryings. Who would not discard a Contestation, an animosity, a bosom and beloved sin, to qualifie himself for so glorious an Employment,

as

as the reſtauration of a *Glorious Church*, and a *Flouriſhing Kingdom*, invaded, and trampled upon by *Rebellious Hypocrites?* What pity it is to ſee men ſo daring, and reſolved, as to hazard and forſake their neereſt *Intereſts* and *Relations*, rather then deliberately to make Shipwrack of their *faith* and *Allegeance*; and yet to ſee the ſame men, as *weak* and *unſtable as water* in bearing up againſt a petty paultry luſt, and in denying themſelves in their own vicious ſenſualities? Which gives occaſion to many men to doubt, whether in their particular engagemenrs, they do not ſeek themſelves more then the common ſervice.

Our *taſk* (I muſt confeſs) is not unlike that of the poor oppreſſed Iſraelites, under the ſevere Egyptian taſk maſters; we have much work to do, but little or no ſtraw wherewithal to do it. Our *perils*, not unlike thoſe S. Paul met withal in his great maſters ſervice. Perils of waters, perils of robbers, perils in the ſea, perils among falſe brethren; but the perils of all perils, are the perils by our own Country men. 2. Cor. 11.26. Our Condition, not unlike that which is deſcribed by the ſame Apoſtle in another place. Troubled we are on every ſide, yet not diſtreſſed; Caſt 1. Cor. 4. 8. 9.

down, but not destroyed; Perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but (we hope in Christ) not under the Doom in the Text) not forsaken of our God In these perils and perplexities, our securest way will be, to betake our selves unto his shelter and Protection, who is the confidence of all the end of the earth, and of them, that are a far off upon the sea.

Psal. 65. 5.

To thee therefore O merciful and gracious God, do we resigne and recommend our selves, our souls, and bodies, our Cause, and all our Councels and designs; beseeching thee to remove our sins as far from us, as they have removed us out of thy favour; O thou that sparedst Ninive in compassion to those many thousand innocents that were therein; be pleased out of thine infinite mercy, to spare those sinful Nations from whence we are, and give not up thine heritage therein to such Confusion; but turn us O God, at the last, and be gracious unto thy servants; Oh satisfie us with thy mercies, and that soon, and do not suffer thy whole displeasure to arise upon us; but do thou arise, and have mercy upon Sion, build thou the walls of our decayed Ierusalem, and cause thy face again to shine upon thy Sanctuary among us; So we, that be thy people, and sheep of

of thy paſture ſhall give thee thankes for ever; and declare thy loving kindneſs from generation to generation.

Thus I have ſhewed the ſeveral kernels of this *Pomgranate*; but to have inſiſted particularly upon every one of them, would have ſwelled this *Treatiſe* beyond its intended Bulk; The main thing I ſhall fix upon for my ſubject, is the *Doctrine of Spiritual Infatuation*, the epidemical diſeaſe and infection of theſe Times; reſerving the other conſiderations, to be inſerted, and interweaved, as ſubſervient handmaids to this grand purpoſe, or to be uſed as ſo many ſlight daſhes, in the pourtraicture of this ugly and deformed monſter of this Age.

Incraſſa cor populi hujus. Make the heart of this people fat. The diſeaſe we have to do withal, lies not in the *Head*; it is not a *vertigo*, or whimſey in the brain, an error in opinion; But 'tis a *deſperate malignant humour* that flies to the *Heart*, the ſeat of the vital Spirits, and the principal part of the whole body. In that black roll of curſes we read of Deut. 28. the greateſt (to my apprehenſion) is that which is ſet down v. 28. *The Lord ſhall ſmite thee with madneſs, and blindneſs, and aſtoniſhment of heart.* And Salomon in that excellent

prayer which he made at the Dedication of the Temple, makes the knowledge and removal of *this plague of the heart*, to be the characteristick note of true repentance, and acceptation with God, 1. King 8 38. 'Tis this part that is *primum vivens*, and *ultimum moriens*, as well in *Grace*, as *Nature*. And therefore, since the Act of the Spiritual Physitian is so much concern'd in the preservation and recovery of this principal part; that I may proceed with the more hopeful successe therein; It will not be amisse to proceed after this method; namely, to shew

1. *The disease it self,*
2. *The Causes of it.*
3. *The Symptomes of it.*
4. *The most hopeful way of Cure of it.*

First of the *Disease*. We say in Physick, that a disease is more then halfe cured, when it is certainly known and discovered; and more grand errors are committed by unwary assurances, then by illiterate applications. This of the heart is mentioned in Scripture with great variety of expressions. That which we read so frequently in Scripture of the *Sons of Belial*, men that lived (in their generations) *Absque jugo*, without any yoke of *Religion*, or *Government* upon them. That which the

Psalmist

Psalmist speaks of a people, whose *hearts were as fat as grease*, (or as brawn, according to the vulgar translation) Psal.119.70. That which the Prophet *Ezekiel* speaks of an Impudent, & stif hearted people, Ezek.2.4. That, which the *Protomartyr Stephen* speaks, of a stiffnecked people, and uncircumcised in heart and ears. Act.7.51. That which *S. Paul* mentions of some, whose consciences were cauterized and seared, as with an hot iron. 1.Tim.4.2. That, which he calls elsewhere, Blindness of heart, in those who (being past feeling) have given themselves over unto licentiousness, to work all uncleaness with greediness, Eph.4.18.19. That which he calls a strong delusion in those who are designed to believe a lie to their own destruction. 2.Thess.2.11. That which he calls the darkness and defilement of the mind and Conscience. Tit.1.15. The same is the desperate disease of the fat heart in the Text. All these are but so many expressions of the same Malignitie in the Soul. So that by the fat heart, we are to understand such a Brawny, obstinate, and obdurate heart, as no admonitions can reclaim, or mercies move, or threatnings regulate, or motions mollifie; an heart that hates to be reformed, that is wilfully resolved to Psal.30. 17.

to subscribe to no command, but to pursue with greedines and delight, the full swinge of its own sensual and depraved inclination.

We say in *Philosophy*; *Qualitates intenduntur, & remittuntur.* All *Qualities* admit of intensions and degrees. For as in *Artificial Contrivances*, one wheel infers the motion of another; and one colour is a preparative to another; till the cloth be dyed in Grain; As in *Matters Military*, a *small defeat* at first, may be the occasion of a total *Rout*: So in *Matters Spiritual*, *per scelera ad scelus*, one iniquity is ordinarily the dore and preparative to another, till at last the sin becoms of a scarlet dye; and one Judgement (if not entertained as coming from the just hand of God;) becomes a fatal preparative to another, till at last the soul becoms palsey-stricken, and hath no sense at all of the hand that smiteth it. Thus it fares with this *Poroſis tes Kardias*. This *Infatuation*, or *Obduration* of the Heart is of several *Kinds* or *Degrees*; I shall speak only of three of them, unto which all may be reduced.

First. There is an obduration which is *natural*, and common to the whole lump and masse of mankind. The Prophet *Jeremy* speaks of a *foreskin* growing

ing upon the heart, which must be taken off. Circumcise your selves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your hearts. Ier. 4. 4. Of which Spiritual Circumcision, the Legal, in the flesh, was but a Type and figure, the true Circumcision being that of the heart; in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of man, but of God, Rom. 2. 29. With this foreskin about the heart, is every man born into the world; and 'tis no shame for us to acknowledge the vileness of our natural pollution, according as *Ezechiel* describes it. Ezech. 16. 4. 5. 6. For till we are cleansed of this filthiness, and this foreskin be taken away, the heart of man is *abominable*, and *disobedient*, *and to every good work* averse, and *reprobate*. Of this speaks the same Prophet also in another place, A new heart will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh, Ezech. 36. 26. So that, when God is said to *harden* any mans *heart*, it is not to be understood of any *positive act*, or *operation* upon the heart, making that hard and impenetrable, which before, was soft and pliable; but (according to the Counsel of his most just, and holy will) by way of

Nega-

Negation, or rather *preterition*; he passeth by the vessels of wrath, and leaves them as he found them, with their natural hardnesse and dryness upon them. No otherwise then as the earth is sometimes parched and made fruitlesse, (not by any positive curse, but) as it was in *Eliahs* time, when the clouds were withheld from pouring their rain upon it. Thus we read of *Sihon King* of the *Amorites*, that when the *Israelites* would have passed peaceably through his territory, paying not only for their *meat*, but for their *water*, and pawning their faith only to passe along the high way, without turning either to the right hand or to the left: It is said, that God *hardned his Spirit*, and *made his heart obstinate*, Deut 2.30. (that is) he left him to be ruined by his own natural peevish, and unfriendly disposition; in opposing that people which he saw God Almighty owned by his visible power and protection. God hardned his heart, *non inducendo malitiam, sed propter peccata præcedentia, subtrahendo gratiam*; saith *Æquinas*.

Deut. 2. 28.

2. There is a second kind of *Obduration*, which is *Casual* and *Voluntary*, the work of a mans own wilful and pernicious industry; A kind of poison extracted out of many venomous and de-

deſtructive ſimples; A cuſtom contracted by the iteration and repetition of many vitious and ungodly actions. Now though *hardneſſe* be the quality of all iron in general; yet there is an apparent difference between the hardneſs of iron in the *Ore*, and the hardneſs of iron in the *Anvil*; That in the *Ore* is hard by *nature*; That in the *Anvil*, is hardned by deſigne, and growes harder every day, by a conſtant multiplication of ſtrokes upon it. That in the *Ore*, is malleable, and eaſily broken in pieces; That in the *Anvil* is ſo obdurate, that it reſiſteth all the ſtrokes that are made upon it. Juſt ſo is it with a mans heart: That, which by nature was but Pollution; by indu'gence and improvement becomes *poiſon*. That, which by nature was but a *skin* about the heart; by cuſtom, becoms a *ſtone* in the heart. Humors when they are rough and compacted, are purged out of the body with greater difficulty; and a complication of ſins is not eaſily diſſolved in the ſoul. For as in the *Natural Conſtitution*, that which is but a *ſlimy viſious humour*, in the ſtomack, is by the heat of the body compacted into *gravel*, and (by the continual acceſſion of this grutie ſubſtance) is digeſted into a *ſtone* in the reins or in the bladder, which

which grows there to such a magnitude, that it becomes a disease, which is seldome cured but with extreme paine and hazard of the patient: Just so is it with the *Spiritual Constitution*; That which by *nature* was but a *pronesse*, and *propensitie* unto evil; by the strength of *Custom*, and encouragement of *Delight*, becoms a *second nature*, a *Necessitie*, whereby a man is so far ensnared and fettered with the cords of his own twisting, that he becoms prisoner and slave unto himself, and his own corrupt affections; and without great grace, and mercy, is never redeemed *into the glorious liberty of the sons of God*. I shall instance only in that cheap and daring provocation, (the sin of cursing and swearing) which makes up a great part of some mens Language; Were it certainly revealed from heaven to the common swearer, that the next oath he swore he should incur the sentence of *Dathan* and *Abiram*, and be carried away quick to Hell, I perswade my selfe he were not able to forbear; so powerful and predominant is the strength of a depraved custom in the soul. And truly, though custom in some cases may be a good plea in *Law*; yet I am sure, 'tis a very bad one in *Divinity*. A man that should be arraigned at the bar of Iustice for ta-

taking a purſe upon the high wey, or for picking a pocket at a ſermon; and ſhould plead at the bar under this form: *My Lord, I pray be good to me, 'tis a Cuſtom I have gotten, and would leave, but I cannot*; Would not all the world cry ſhame on him, away with him to Execution? Certainly the caſe is the ſame between God and us. Are we born down with the ſtrength of cuſtom? The more our guilt and ſhame; that (to the high diſhonour and provocation of a merciful God,) could be content to ſin over the ſame ſins for ten, twenty, thirty yeers together; without ever taking notice that we were in the *gall of bitterneſs, and bond of iniquity*. And truly, he that ſhall favour himſelf in any wicked way, and indulge unto any pleaſing tranſgreſſion, with a purpoſe to perſevere therein: Does apparently ſtrengthen himſelf in his wickedneſſe; delivers up the poſſeſſion of himſelf to that *Devil, whoſe name is Legion*; and makes way for a third kind of *obdnration*, which follows in the next place to be ſpoken of. Mar. 5 9.

3. There is a third kind of *Obduration*; and that is *Divine*, and *Judicial*; the juſt reward of the former obſtinacy. For when the *Donor of every good and perfect gift*, finds his *Talents* abuſed, Ezech. 16. 17.

his

his silver, and gold, and the fair jewels of his mercy, made the fuel and matter of more licentious provocation; his Grace turned into wantonnesse, the motions of his good Spirit, vilified and rejected; no abatement of sin, no improvement in Grace, notwithstanding all his stripes and Fatherly Corrections: When he sees the heart of a man so wedded unto his own way, that with Ahab, he sets himself to work wickednesse in the sight of the Lord; And with Absolom, is not ashamed to commit a barbarous and horrid wickednesse in the sight of all Israel, and the Sun; When a man is grown so strangely habituated unto wickednesse, that he can as well forbear to eate, or drink, or sleep, as the contrivance and prosecution of his malicious designs; And so desperately resolved, as to make a Covenant with Death; and to be at an agreement with Hell; cannot endure to think of being reformed, and therefore declines and hates any thing that may tend to his Conversion: Then (as a just reward and punishment of this wilfulnes) *God* delivers up such a man unto himself, withdraws the sweet influence of his grace, suffers him to take his full swinge in wickednesse, and to run head-long (without any restraint) to his own ruin and destruction.

1. King. 21. 25.

2. Sam. 16. 22.

Esay. 28. 15.

This

This I take to be the *obduration* of *Pharaohs* heart, ſo frequently mentioned in the book of Exodus. For it is ſaid Exod. 8. 15. When Pharaoh ſaw, that there was reſpite, he hardned his heart, and harkned not, &c. and v. 32. Pharaoh hardned his heart this time alſo; &c and then Exod. 9. 12. it's ſaid God hardned the heart of Pharaoh. And 'tis obſervable how he is threatned v. 14. I will at this time; ſend all my plagues upon thy heart, and upon thy ſervants, and upon thy people, &c. So that firſt Pharaoh hardens, and then God hardens. Pharaoh hardens himſelf, and God leaves him to himſelf. Pharaoh hardens wilfully; and God hardens judicially. This I take to be the doom of the accurſed fig-tree in the Goſpel, under which is compriſed every barren Chriſtian. Let no fruit grow on thee hence- Mat. 21.
forward for ever. Theſe are the trees 19.
Saint Iude ſpeaks of, Whoſe fruit wi- Iude 12.
thereth, without fruit, twiſe dead, pluck'd up by the roots. Where the Method of Gods Iuſtice is very obſervable upon an obſtinate and Apoſtate ſinner. Firſt, *His fruit withereth*, he deſerts his ſtation, grows weary of well doing, and puts off the yoke of Chriſtianity, as if it were an intolerable burden; Then, without fruit, The ſap of grace

is

is withdrawn, and the soul becoms immediately barren; Then, twise dead, dead naturally, and dead spiritually; For as the soul is the life of the body, so is the Grace of God the life of the soul. And lastly, pluck'd up by the root; not presently cast into the fire; They may continue in the garden of Gods Church a long time after, may participate of the dew of heaven, of the holy Ordinances of God, and external communion with his people. But as never fruit comes of a tree that is pluck'd up by the roots, and so left; So never any thing capable of Divine acceptation, comes from a man thus miserably deserted. The ground, and foundation of this doctrine, I conceive, may be safely laid upon that maxime of our Saviour. *Habenti dabitur.* To him that hath, shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; But whosoever hath not, (that is hath not improved his talent) from him shall be taken away, even that which he seemeth to have. These are the several kinds, or degrees of *Obduration*; and this last I take to be the disease in its full height, and malignity.

Mat. 13. 12.

Secondly, We are in the next place to look upon the cause of this disease, and what is particularly instrumental unto it. We say in Philosophy, *Anima sequi-*

ſequitur temperamentum corporis. The ſoul hath its operation according to the temper, organs, and diſpoſition of the Body. As there is no *diſeaſe* in the *body*, ſo there is no *diſtemper* or depravity in the *mind*, but is the effect and product of a certain particular cauſe. So that as Infatuation of mind is a certain preparative unto judgement: ſo there are certain preparatives and prediſpoſitions to Infatuation of mind.

Two ſorts of evils there are in the world, the evil of ſin, and the evil of puniſhment; this of *Infatuation* is both: it is hard to ſay whether hath the greater ſhare in the compoſition. This twiſted evil, as it ariſes from ſeveral cauſes, ſo it is compounded of ſeveral ingredients.

In the general; God himſelf may be ſaid to harden, according to that of the Apoſtle, Rom. 9. 8. *Whom he will, he hardneth*; Not by any poſitive *operation* upon the mind (as was ſaid before) but by a privative withdrawing or withholding of *Grace*. No otherwiſe, then as wax being taken from the fire, from being ſoft and pliable, returns to its natural hardneſſe, and inflexibility. And this is the juſt permiſſion of Almighty God, that ſuch as will not conform unto him, and walk in his ways; ſhould be left

left unto themselves, to take their own precipitate and destructive courses.

For *Instrumental Causes*, there are many. To instance in some few, for all the rest. The first *Medium* unto *Obduration* I shall propound, is, *The misunderstanding* and *abuse of secular prosperity and successe*. Thus *Senacharibs* best argument to perswade Ierusalem to revolt from good King *Hezechiah*, is drawn from the successe of his sword, upon the men and gods of *Hamah*, *Arpad*, and and *Sepheruaim*; and from thence he
2 King 18. 34. 35. inferr'd, that therefore the *Lord of hosts should not deliver Ierusalem out of his hand*; And never understood the guilt of his Blasphemy, nor the falacy of his argument, nor the vanity of *Nisrock* his Idol, till he felt the power of his maker, and the stroke of Divine vengeance, in the swords of his own Sons, sheathed in his own bowels, in the very Act and posture of his Idolatrous worship. When the greatnesse of *Nebuchadnezzars* power and conquest lifted him up so high, that he forgot he was a *man*; *God* brought him down and humbled him into the very nature and condition of a *beast*.

Dan. 4. There was a time when *Babylon was grown fat, as the heyfer at grasse, by eating up the inheritance of the Lord*; but

but it lasted not long, for within a short time after, *Every one that went by Babylon, was astonished, and hissed at the sight of all her plagues.* Ier. 50. 11. And the same Prophet takes notice of some of Gods own people, that were *waxen fat, and shined, that overpassed the deeds of the wicked, that did not Iudge the cause of the Fatherlesse,* &c. and *yet they prospered until the day of Gods visitation came upon them.* Ier. 5. 28. 29. Thus was *Egypt grown* as a *fair heyfer,* and *her men in the midst of her, as so many fatted bullocks,* and all to their own destruction; as appears Ier. 46. 20. Thus was Iesurun grown fat, and kicked, he was grown thick, and covered with fatnesse; and mark what followed hereupon, he presently forsook the God that made him, and lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation. Deut. 32. 15. And therefore the Divine Omniscience foreseeing this evil consequent arising from blessings abused, enters a caveat against it: Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping his Commandments; lest when thou hast eaten, and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; and when thy herds, and thy flockes multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplyed, and all that thou hast is multiplyed: then thine heart be lifted up,

up, and thou forget the Lord thy God, &c. Deut. 8. 11. 12. 13 14. The *Psalmist* speaks very home and close to our purpose, who (describing the wicked's day of Sunshine) saith, Their eys stand out with fatnesse, they have more then heart could wish, they are not in trouble, as other men, neither are they plagued as other men; pray observe the consequent, Therefore pride compasseth them about like a chain, violence covereth them as a garment; thou doest set them in slippery places, thou castest them down to destruction, how are they brought into desolation in a moment? They are utterly consumed with terrors. Psal. 73. 5. 6. 7. 18. 19. Impunity is no good evidence to prove Integrity; it is very often the instrument of sottish and secure stupidity. Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily; therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. Eccl. 8. 11. Where, though sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily; yet ('tis worth the observing) every evil work, (how plausibly soever disguised and palliated) is immediately sentenced. There is an obligation unto punishment belongs to every worker of Iniquity, which nothing but repentance can reverse and cancel. *Salomon* saith,

There

There is a just man that perisheth in his righteousnesse, and there is a wicked man that prolongeth his life in wickedness. Eccl. 7. 15. and S. Paul saith, If in this life only we had hope in Christ, (speaking there of the Saints and servants of God) we were of all men the most miserable. 1. Cor. 15. 19.

I have produced all these *Texts* and *Instances* for no other purpose, but to shew the vanity and imposture of these times, which have built so much upon so false and rotten a foundation, as if they had borrowed light rather from the *Turkish Alcoran*, then from any *Scripture* given by *Inspiration*.

So that, however ignorant and ungrounded men, and sometimes Gods own select and peculiar servants, (as *Iob*, and *David*,) may stumble at the prosperity of fools and wicked men; and look upon their secular advantages, as so many marks of the *Divine goodnesse* and Benignity; yet let them but approach the *Sanctuary of God*, and there consult his *Sacred Oracles*; they shall find, that the stations of these men are set *in dark and slippery places*; That *their Damnation slumbreth not*, but is rather so much the nearer, by how much the farther they think themselves removed out of the reach of it. And for those of our *Age* 2. Pet. 2. 3.

and

and *Nation*, who have built their greatneſſe upon the ruines and rubbiſh of a glorious *Church*, and a flouriſhing *Kingdom*; that have fatted themſelves with the blood of their brethren, and from the *Tayl of the people*, have advanced themſelves to ſuch a pitch, as to be able to tramp'e upon the head and throne of *Majeſty* it ſelf, however theſe men may flatter and applaud themſelves in the ſucceſſe of their own Councels and Contrivances; and by an *Hyſteron Proteron*, *conclude* and *infer Godlineſs* from *Gain*, and not *Gain* from *Godlineſs*; *Sanctity* from *Succeſs*, and not *Succeſs* from *Sanctity*; I could wiſh they would be adviſed to ſuſpend their Iudgement of Gods ſecret decree upon our *Nation*, till they have ſeen the laſt *Act* upon the ſtage. There is a *Tragical Scene* will one day ſhew it ſelf, whenſoever God ſhall draw the curtain, it ſhall then appear to all the world, that *their webs ſhall not become garments, neither ſhall they cover themſelves with their works, their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in their hands.* Iſa. 59,6. Then ſhall be fulfilled that ſaying of *Eliphaz*, *A dreadful ſound is in their ears; in proſperity, the deſtroyer ſhall come upon them*; Iob 15.21. In the mean time, I ſhall only recommend unto them

them *two Texts* of Scripture, which I wish may be well studied and digested of Them. The one ~~is~~ Isa. 30. 12. 13. Thus saith the holy one of Israel; *Because ye despise my word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon; therefore this iniquity shall be to you, as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in an high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly, at an instant.* The other is Isa. 50. 11. *Behold all ye that kindle a fire, that compass about your selves with sparks, walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow.*

I shall dismiss this point with *two Cautions* only, the one concerns the right stating of our *Judgement*; and that is, That we would not think the worse but the better of our *Religion*, for the cruel persecution which the Devil by these infernal instruments, hath raised against it. There were some in the *Psalmists* time, that irreligiously demanded, saying, where is *now* the God of the *Hebrews*? And there are, (even of those that have laid the train to our Destruction) that demand with as much insolence as absurdity; where is now the *Protestant Religion* in *England*? Not, where was it before *Luthers* time, but where is it now? To whom we answer,

That it is now where it was before *Luthers* time, that is, under the *Eclipſe* of *Perſecution*. They may with as much reaſon demand (with thoſe uſeful inſtruments of theirs, the Sectaries) where is the Kings power now in England? Since it is not exerciſed at preſent by any perſons deputed by his *Majeſty*, nor in any part of that *Iſland*, that I know of, which if they do; *In promptu eſt reſponſio*; Every true hearted Engliſhman hath his anſwer ready, (though he dare not ſpeak it out) namely, That the Kings power (however trampled upon by Rebels and Regicides) lives ſtill, (and long may it) in the hearts, of all his faithful and loyal ſubjects. And as for our *Religion*; I doubt not but (like the late martyred defender of it) it will improve by ſufferings, and appear more glorious and celeſtial, when theſe black clouds and foggs ſhall be diſſolved and ſcattered into nothings; we are neither *Millenaries*, nor *Papiſts*; We pretend not to be members of a *glorious viſible triumphant Church*; We eſteem it mercy enough to be of the deſpiſed members of a *Church Militant*; to be of the poſterity of the *woman perſecuted by the great red dragon into the wilderneſs*; who, when he could not reach her perſon by *thoſe waters of perſecution*

tion he caſt after her; was *wroth with the woman*, and reſolves to *make war with the remnant of her ſeed* for ever. Rev. 12. 17.

The other *Caution* concerns our *Converſations*; That as we would not think the worſe of our faith: ſo we would think the worſe of our *Lives*, for the growth of our enemies power and ſucceſs: and that our wilful and reſolved wickedneſſes, are of a more fatal and pernicious influence, then our higheſt courages, or moſt active performances can compenſate. Let that *Military Caution* of *Moſes* be ſet ſeriouſly before our eys. *When the hoſt goeth forth againſt thine enemies, then keep thee from every wicked thing.* Deut. 23. 9. For however we ſit here, warm and diſingaged; yet how far our friends in other places are (a) at this inſtant, expoſed to the cruel mercies of our Enemies; How far our Soveraign may be endangered by ſnares, and treacheries, and cloſe conſpiracies; How far we are concerned in the final iſſue of the war; and how far we may wound our friends and their deſigns at any diſtance, would be ſeriouſly thought on by all that wiſh *us good luck, and that we may proſper in the name of Lord.* That as we are hungry and greedy enquirers after

(a) About the time of that mercileſſe ſlaughter at Drogeda in Ireland.

news and transactions; so we would be as zealous in abstaining from that which will certainly render our intelligence more welcom and desired. That after a long and sad experience of the severe hand of God against us; God may at last have the honour, and our selves the comfort of a final victory over our selves, and sinful enormities, as well as Enemies.

2. Sometimes God suffers the hearts of such as hate to be reformed, to be hardned and infatuated *per ministerium Diaboli*, by the service and ministry of our grand enemy the *Divel*. For *the Angels which kept not their first estate*, are not so *reserved in chains under darkness*; but that they have leave to walk the world, to promote the Kingdom of darkness. S. John tells us, *The great dragon was cast out of heaven, that old serpent called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world, he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him*, Rev. 12.9. And our Saviour compares the Kingdom of heaven, to a man who sowed good seed in his field, but while men slept, his enemy came, and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way; Mat. 13.24. 25. Almighty God hath four principal fields, *Heaven*, *Paradise*, the *Church*, and

mans

mans heart. In heaven, *Lucifer* sowed *pride*; In *Paradise*, *Satan* sowed *disobedience*; In the *Church* he soweth *Schismes* and *Heresies*; and in mans heart he sows all manner of unlawful sects. And for the great harvest he gains by his unwearied industry in sowing, he is called the *God of this world*, *the prince of the ayr*, *who ruleth in the hearts of the children of disobedience*. Eph. 2. 2.

It is said of *Judas Iscariot*, that after he had received the sop from his masters hand (which was the signal discovery which of the twelve should prove the Traitor:) that Satan entred into him, Ioh. 13. 27. What advise this infernal tutor dictated unto him, is set down V. 2. *He put into his heart to betray* his master; which was prophesied long before, that *Satan should stand at his right hand*, Psal. 109, 6. It was very proper and natural, that the Divel should have the sole conduct of Iudas, who was to be the guide unto them who were to take *Jesus*. All Treason, though never so speciously guilded and disguised, we know from whence it comes, it is neither better nor worse then the Divels whisper. And indeed there is no reconciling *Christ* and Belial; no middle path between obedience and disobedience; no neutrality between

God, and his enemies. They that will not have the one of raign over them, do *ipso facto*, subscribe unto the others Government. Saul is no sooner deserted by a good Spirit, but immediatly possessed of an evil one. And this is most agreeable to the Iustice of God, that such as will not be led by the saving conduct of his good Spirit; should be left to the mercy of a Spirit so full of malice, that (when he cannot have his full blow at man) receives some satisfaction in the destruction of an herd of swine; Mar. 3.12.

1. Sam 16.14.

We read of Ahab, that being designed (by the Iustice of God) to fall at Ramoth Gilead; a lying Spirit comes and offers his service to be the instrument of his destruction; and propounding a very plausible way to effect his designe (namely by being a lying Spirit in the mouth of all his Prophets) he gains a Commission (or rather a Permission) to go and act accordingly: Where we may pause a little, and enquire, what was the reason the Divel was so active and officious in this service? Was it to befriend the Syrian army with a glorious victory? 'Tis not likely he should be friend to any party, who is the irreconciliable enemy of all mankind: Or was it for the accomplishment

pliſhment of *Eliahs* Prophecy concerning *Ahabs* fall? Doubtleſſe, the promoting and accompliſhing *Gods Truth*, (*quatenus* his *Truth*) is no very pleaſing employment to a lying Spirit: He that was a Lyar from the beginning, and the arch Patron of all impoſture, would certainly change Gods *Truth* into a *lye*, if the thing were poſſible, and his power proportionable to his malice. No; his malice ſtrikes at the King of Iſrael, that in that one blow he might wound all the *thouſands of Iſrael*: He knew well, that if the ſheperd were once but ſmitten, the ſheep would immedialtly be ſcattered into miſery and confuſion enough. Which as Micaiah ſaw in a viſion, ſo the Divel by the advantage of long experience knew, would be the certain conſequent of the Kings fall. And therefore for this grand purpoſe he whets all his endeavours, for this he *Councels* the King of *Aſſiria* to iſſue out a Command, ſaying, *Fight neither with ſmall nor great, ſave only with the King of Iſrael.* For this he ſends his *Emiſſaries* among all the *Prophets*; For this he raiſeth perſecution againſt ſingle, but faithful *Micaiah*, becauſe he would not follow his falſe ſuggeſtions: And at the accompliſhment of this deſigne, how do the helliſh 1. King 22. 31.

and infernal *furies* clap their black hands; in a tryumphant acclamation, saying, *There, there, so would we have it.*

I have insisted the longer on this story, for the near affinitie and correspondence it hath with these times. For let us but set a good King in the place of a bad; and sure we have much of *Micaiahs vision* accomplished in our *Israel*. Sure I am, we are scattered on all hands, as sheep that have no shepherd (at least no shepherd where he should be) and in this our sad confusion, we are not without good store of *Foxes*, and *Tygers*, and *wolves in sheeps clothing* preying upon us: And no wonder, for was the lying Spirit so active and busie in *Ahabs* time, and hath he been lesse active and busie in *ours*? Was he so active and busie in curting of an *Ahab* from the *Throne* of *Israel*; and hath he been lesse active and busie in curting of an *Hezechiah* from the *Throne* of *England*? Was it the language of the lying Spirit in the *Prophets* of those times, *Go up and prosper*: and is it not the language of the same Spirit in the black mouthes of our *Prophets*, *Go on and prosper* in the most prodigious ways that ever the Sun beheld? Was *Michaiah* smitten, and imprisoned, and reduced to bread and water for speaking

ing in the name of the Lord; And are not our *Micaiahs*, our *Prophets*, as vilely and villanously intreated by our *Pashurs* and *Zedechias* among the *Prophets*, and by our *Ammons* and Governours among the people? I would to God that many of us, (the Lords *Prophets*) had but so much as *bread and water*, that we could call our own, till our *Soveraign Lord* the *King* were setled in his Throne in peace. But alas, what can either Priest or people expect, whilst the goodly *pillars* of our Land, Religion, and Iudicature are quite overturned and laid aside? Whilst all Law is resolved into the bloody sentence of the sword; and all Gospel into the private whisper of a seducing and destructive spirit? And all power (under the permission of the supreme wheel) receives its Commission from the *Prince of the ayr, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience?* Eph. 2. 2.

He that in the beginning seduced the first woman in the form of a *Serpent* (and by that imposture introduced a general inundation of iniquity upon the world) is now grown so wise, as to *transform himself into an Angel of light:* And in this white and Saintlike disguise, has leave from a just God, to whisper to the Consciences of wilful 2. Cor. 11, 14.

and unstable men, such strange delusions, under the pretence of new light, as fils the Christian world with wonder and amazement. 'Twere easie to set down a list of these *new lights*, but that I look upon them as too many, and indeed too scandalous to be inserted in a Protestant Treatise: And therefore to wave a particular Narration of the *whimseys* and *phrensies* which the boldnesse and madnesse of these times hath thrust out into the world, together with the *absurdities*, *defects*, *and hæsitations in prayer*, which have been pinned upon the *Sacred Spirit* of God, and all by vertue of *Excitations*, *Incitations*, and *Inspirations* extraordinary; as if the same *Holy Ghost* declared one thing by his *pen*, and suggested the clean contrary by his whisper. He that shall take up his stand in his Sanctuary of God, and from the pillar of truth (established upon the clear word of God) shall take a survey of the *Doctrines* and *Principles* which have commenced of late yeers, together with the general belief and adherence which hath been given unto them: The wild and intemperate Zeal of the promoting them; and the Banishment (or rather Burial) of Meekness, Patience, Peace, Charity, and all Evangelical graces, in the managery of

of their designs so full of glorious pretenses; must either resolve aforehand to wink and blind himself by partiality and designe, or els be enforced to conclude from the *fruits* we have reaped, that the seed was never taken out of *Gods granary*; but that it hath been the Businesse and Industry of our envious Adversary, to sow his *tares*, to the great encrease of his peculiar harvest, whilst we have slept and snorted in our sin and security.

So that, as when God opened the eys of *Elishas* servant, he saw then visibly the protection of that heavenly host, which before he was not able to discern; so (on the contrary) would the same God be pleased to do the like Spiritual Cure upon the eys of our minds; We should soon discern those *Legions of Infernal Spirits*, by whose seduction and delusion we have been cheated of the favour of God, and abused and ensnared into so much misery and ruine. Thus, *Deus deficit, gratiam detrahendo. Diabolus afficit, maliciam apponendo; homo seipsum inficit duritiem contrahendo.*

Nor is this al, The Divel has not perfected his design, when he has *instilled his poyson*, unlesse he give his *Opium* too, and lay the soul asleep upon the

pillow

pillow of ſecurity; Thoſe diſeaſes of the body are of greateſt danger, and of neareſt affinity with our diſſolution, that take away all ſenſe of pain and anguiſh; as the Palſie, Lethargie, &c. And the fatteſt parts of the body are ever obſerved to be the leaſt ſenſible, as having in them the feweſt fibers and nerves, which are the inſtruments of Senſation. So that, when the Divel is ſaid to make the heart fat; he makes it Secure and ſenſleſſe of any danger, ariſing from our own ſin, or Gods Iudgements. And indeed, the Divel can never call a man his own, till he hath him at this lock; For ſo long as there is any ſenſe of ſin, any touches or twitches of Conſcience; there is ſome hopes of recovery, a poſſibility there is, *he may ſee with his eys*, and *hear with his ears*, and *underſtand with his heart, and convert, and be healed*. But when a man hath ſinned himſelf out of all ſenſe of ſin; when there is no *Monitor* in the ſchool of the ſoul, no check of Conſcience to remember him of a *Quid feci?* what have I done againſt God, my neighbour, and my own ſoul? ſure ſuch a man is in *falva cuſtodia Diaboli*; there is very little hope of ſuch a mans recovery. The *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks very particularly to this point, where, ſpeaking of

deſpe-

desperate rebels and oppressors, he saith: *They are inclosed in their own fat, and therefore their mouth speaketh great swelling words*, Psal. 17. 10. But more of this when I shall speak of the Symptomes of Infatuation.

In the mean time, the Consideration of what hath been delivered on this point, may be enough, I hope, to prompt us unto these lessons.

First, *To try and examine all spirits and suggestions whatsoever*; especially in an age so miserably haunted, and infested with evil spirits, as this wherein we live. There is a spirit that differs very little from flesh and blood in its corruption, and pravity; and this spirit the Propher Ezechiel *calls our own Spirit*, a blind guide within us. There is a *perswasion* which S. Paul gives Caution against; a *perswasion that cometh not of him that calleth us*. There is a piece of wisdom which S. Iames calls wisdom mistaken; which is not from above; for that wisdom is always pure and peaceable, &c. but a wisdom in contending and quarrelling, in managing strife and bitterness, with most advantage to our selves; *Achitopels wisdom*, to put differences out of all possibility of reconciliation; and this, in whomsoever it is, Iam. 3. is earthly, sensual, and divellish. It shal 15.

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be our wisdom to enquire carefully into all these, and above all these to be alwayes awake to the danger and deception of our own false heart, which is very prone to entertain and swallow what is most pallatable unto flesh and blood. *Latet anguis in herba*; The old Serpent lurkes commonly under the fairest flower.

Secondly, having discovered the impostor; That we would conceive our Christian reputation very much concerned, in bidding defiance to this Enemy. Most men are bold only in bragging they have great courage; when indeed they have none at all in opposing the enemies of God, and their own salvation. And let no man think the engagement of his Christian warfare, a difficult, tedious, or unreasonable service; There is Armour of proof provided for us from head to foot. And the Apostle requires no more of the Christian souldier, but only to keep his station. When the *Israelites* (having the *Sea* before them, and the *Egyptian Army* behind them) begin to suspect *Moses* his Conduct, and *Gods protection*: *Moses* requires no more of them, but only to stand still, and *they should see the Salvation of God*. A man would think it no small encouragement to men of Military

Eph. 6.
Eph. 6. 13.
Exod. 13 13.

tary employment, to be assured before they went out to battel, that their enemies would certainly fly, if they did but keep their stations. And yet *S. James* assures us infallibly, that this shall be the certain issue; *If we will but resist, the Divel will flee*; He doth not say if ye overcome, the Divel will flee; but if ye do but resist, the day is your own; and yet how few are to be found of so much resolution as belongs to the bare resisting of evil. It is not in the power of Beelzebub, or all the Divels in Hell, to compel a man to subscribe to a temptation. And therefore let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted, neither tempteth he any man, but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lusts, and entiçed. Iam. 1. 13. 14. What the *vis formativa* is to the *Embrio* in the *womb*; the same is *compliance* to the production of that ugly monster sin. Consent forms it, Desire gives it birth, Delight nurseth it, and practise and perseverance brings it to its full growth and perfection; and when it is finished, ye know what it brings forth; Death and something worse then death, after death: (namely) a worm that never dies but wilfully gnawing upon the Conscience unto all eternity. Iam. 4. 7.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, That since the Divel is so instrumental to our *Infatuation*, that we would warily decline whatsoever is instrumental to the Divels purposes, to the growth of his power either in us, or over us.

That we would look upon *Idleness*, as the *Devils pillow*, whereon the soul sleeps it self into a fatnesse and indisposition unto any motion that is praise worthy. He that hath nothing to do, is at leisure to do any thing; and he that will not give himself an employment, shall be sure to have one provided for him by his severest enemy.

That we would look upon *Drunkennesse*, as a sin, wherein we degenerate from men, into the nature and condition of very *Beasts*. Certainly, did that sin write its deformities externally in the face, in a *Wry mouth*, or a *Squint Ey*; with what warinesse and circumspection would we abstain from it? whereas it leaves far greater blemishes upon the soul, and yet behold men daily vomiting out their own shame, and daily returning with greedinesse to their own drunken vomit. A sin which as we have learnt of other *Nations*; So I would to God we had not learned to go beyond them in it. A sin wherein,

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we diſcard our Reaſon, our Religion, and all that is of God in us, and put our ſelves entirely under the power, conduct, and poſſeſſion of the Divel. And how far he will make us act in his ſervice ere we are ſober, we know not (we know not, did I ſay?) I fear, if we well recollect our ſelves, we know too much, enough to fill our eys with tears, and our hearts with ſorrow and compunction.

That we would look upon *Fornication* and *Adultery* as upon ſins that take the members of Chriſt, and employ them in the ſervice of an unclean ſpirit. And ſure if Mary Magdalene for her looſeneſſe this way, was poſſeſſed with ſeven Divels; it may be feared that if Mary Magdelens ſin be not waſhed in Mary Magdalens tears, the ſame unclean ſpirit will reſide with the ſame unclean works, and take unto him ſeven other more wicked then himſelf, and multiply at laſt into a Legion of Divels.

Laſtly; That we would look upon *Oaths* and *Blaſphemies*, and curſed *Execrations*; Not only as ſo many *Grievances* of the *Holy Ghoſt*, (that would fain *ſeal us unto the day of our Redemption*:) But as it is the very language of the Damned Spirits, who the more they Blaſ-

Eph 4. 30.

Blaſpheme, the more they are tormented, and that to all eternity. Certainly, this cheap and daring provocation, is not the ſoft *Ventriloquie* of ſome modeſt whiſpering Divel within us; but the language of a bold, daring, roaring Divel; that takes delight to rave in publike, and ſpits defiance in the face of God. In the hiſtory of our *Saviours* miraculous Cures, we read of divers that were corporally poſſeſſed by the Devil; and certainly, the contemplation of his power and malice, exerciſed with ſo much cruelty and Tyranny in thoſe *Demoniaks*, cannot but affect us with much pity and Compaſſion. Who would not grieve to ſee his Chriſtian brother, that is bone of his bone, and fleſh of his fleſh, vexed and diſquieted by an Infernal ſpirit? to ſee him caſt ſomtimes into the fire, ſomtimes into the water, ſomtimes foming at the mouth, ſomtimes cutting his own fleſh, at the will, and pleaſure of his cruel Maſter? And yet how few are there among us that have either eys to ſee; or hearts to grieve at the danger and reality of Spiritual Poſſeſſion? Do we not daily ſee our friends, and acquaintance caſt into the fire, and into the water, I, and by the power and inſtigation of the Divel too?

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Are they not cast into the water? The deep drowning waters of *Atheisme*, *Apostacy*, and *despair*; the extreme cold waters of *senslesnesse*, and *stupidity*? Are they not cast into the fire? The hot burning fire of *Lust* and *Concupiscence*; the wild fire of *Sedition* and *rebellions*, the scorching fire of *Anger* and *Revenge*? And yet so far are we from pitying these men in their deplorable condition, that we make their misery the matter of our Mirth and Iollity; and play with their destruction, as if the souls *Tragedy* were but a *Farce*, designed only for sport and recreation.

We read of witches, that (in that solemne Covenant, and Contract they make with the Divel) they do seriously and expresly renounce their Baptisme, with all the interest they have in Christ. Though many are strangely given now a dayes, to renounce and revoke the vowes and promises they made in Baptism: Yet I will not conclude so desperately of any auditory; Only this I must say, that till they bid defiance to these, and the like workes of the Divel, though they are not witches by solemn agreement; yet I have too much reason to suspect they are bewitched and charmed with the *Spiritual Infatuation* in the Text; and I should suspect

my

my self possessed of a *dumb Divel*, if I should not let them know so much.

Thirdly, the soul is sometimes bewitcht into infatuation, *per Ministerium pseudoprophetarum. By the ministry and agency of false Prophets*; For the divel does not gain all his ends by the influence of his own immediate suggestions. As he may have leave to assume the very flesh and bones of a deceased person; so he may have leave also to employ the brains, and lungs, and organs of a living agent; and so he hath done in all ages (the most notorious Hereticks being not more infamous for their heresie, then eminent for their parts.) And if any man suspect this truth, I can produce no fewer then 450. Prophets of Baal, and of the groves, 400. more to witnesse it; 1 King. 18.19. These factors for the kingdom of *darknes* are so clearly described by the pen of the holy Ghost, and with such particular marks upon them, for caution and discovery, that (notwithstanding all their fine spun arts) I should wonder my self into an astonishment to see (in a Church where the *Prophets*, *Evangelists*, and *Apostles* are so often read and preached) a people so strangely cosened and ensnared as we have been; but that I read, that *Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.*

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These must give me leave (notwithstanding all their power and influence to do mischief) to enter a little into their discovery; and though they are very changeable in their shape and complexion; yet by the help of that light, that searcheth even *between the joynts and marrow*, I shall shew you these wandring stars, that so all men that would not make shipwrack of faith & a good conscience; may know their danger, and learn at last to *fear God, and honour their King, and to meddle no more with those men, who are* thus wantonly and desperately *given to change.* Prov. 24. 21.

And this I take to be no digression at all from the Text, since it was the fate of this people (to whom the Prophet addresses himself) to be ruined by the frauds of their false Prophets, who by preaching smooth things unto them, laid them fast asleep in their own security; and would never suffer them to hear of sword or famine, till they were surprised by these judgements past all recovery. Ier. 14. 15.

We read in Scripture of three sorts of false Prophets; there were some whose predictions were very true, and yet themselves were false Prophets, because their hearts and affections were very false

false and insincere. Such a one was *Balaam*, of whose prophesies we read Num. 24. Its said of him, that he *heard the words of God, and saw the visions of the Almighty*, v. 4. and by vertue of this illumination, he prophesied of Edom, Amaleck, and the Kenite, of the future prosperity of Israel, spake particularly of Iacobs star, which was to rise many hundred yeers after. And yet we find this unerring Prophet in his visions, branded by two Apostles, S. Iude, and S. Peter, for *loving the wages of unrighteousnes*, and was *rebuked for his iniquity, the dumb Ass speaking with mans voice, forbidding the madnes of that Prophet*. Thus *Caiphas* the Iewish high Priest was a Propher; He prophesied in the general, that *it was expedient that one man should dy for the people*; and particularly, *that Jesus should dy for that Nation*; and this was most true, otherwise, not that Nation only, but all the Nations in the world had perished everlastingly. And yet the Evangelical history tels us, that Caiaphas was notorious conspirator against that innocent *Lamb of God, who was slain for the whole world*. Balaam and Caiphas spake both well, but did extremely ill; both spake as they were inspired, only with this difference between them, Balaam knew

Iude 2. 2 Pet. 2. 15, 16.

Ioh. 11. 50, 51.

what

what he ſpake, but Caiphas did not; God opened his mouth as he did the mouth of Balaams Aſſe, which ſpake true; but (in the mean time) knew not what ſhe ſpake.

There is another ſort of falſe Prophets, who have been ever employed by the father of lies, for the promoting and diſperſing of deluſions and impoſtures. Thus 400. Prophets are employed and governed by one lying ſpirit, to ſeduce Ahab to fall at Ramoth Gilead, 1 Kin. 22 6. Thus Hananiah propheſied falſly of the Iſraelites return out of Babylon, and ſtrengthned his propheſie, by *breaking a yoke from off the prophet Ieremiahs neck*; and all this, for no other purpoſe, but to *make the people truſt in a ly*; Jer. 28. 15. And that theſe Prophets might have the greater credit with the people, it was ſomtimes permitted unto them (as unto the Egyptian ſorcerers to do miracles) to give ſignes and wonders; otherwiſe that caution of Moſes had been in vain, Deut. 13. 1, 2. *If there ariſe among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a ſigne, or a wonder, and the ſign or wonder come to paſs*, &c. by which it appears, that the Prophet might be a falſe Prophet, and yet the wonder, the ſign, might have an exact accompliſhment; only to try the people Jer. 28. 10. 11.

people. *whether they did love the Lord their God with all their heart, and with all their soul*, Deut. 13. 3.

The third sort of false Prophets, were such, as whether they spake True, or false, were (out of question) false Prophets, and false in their propheſyings too, and that on another ground; namely. Because they intruded themselves into that Sacred employment without Commission, saying thus saith the Lord; when the Lord never spake at all by them. Of such as these, God himself seems to complain of; *The Prophets propheſie lyes in my name, I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them, they propheſie unto you a false vision, and Divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart*, Jer. 14. 14. These were a kind of over active Prophets, that make more haſt, then good speed; They were not sent, yet they ran) saith another text) *they were not spoken unto; yet they propheſied.* Ier. 23. 21. Of this sort especially are those swarms of *Locusts* which have so miserably, and perniciously invaded our Coasts. And therefore to wipe off any scandalous aspersion which may fall upon our Church or Religion, by reason of these Routeseus, and firebrands; we must profeſſe with S. John, *E nobis egreſſi*

egressi sunt, sed non erant ex nobis. These notorious *Antichrists went out from us*, and have been seen among us, *but they were never of us.* A man may demand of these, as of him in the Gospel, *friend how canest thou in hither not having a wedding garment?* So friends, how came ye into the Church of England without Ordination, and Orders? *Jesus we know*, and *Paul we know*, and all their lawful successors we know; but who ye are we know not. We know you pretend to have a Commission from *Jesus Christ*, with so much intemperate boldnesse, as if you were the only persons employed and entrusted by him; But, pretend you what you will, we know what *Jesus Christ* hath concluded of such as you are, Ioh. 10. 1. *He that entreth not by the dore into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief, and a robber.* Our Saviour himself was the *dore* to his *Apostles*, and his *Apostles* and their *Successors*, the *dore* to all that ever were admitted *shepherds* in a regular and *Apostolique* manner. The Ministers of the Gospel are called *Stewards*, 1 Cor. 4. 1 and *Ambassadours*, 2. Cor. 5. 20 Now for an *Ambassadour* to move in an employment without a Commission, is a presumption of so high a nature, that (I think) the Law makes it

1 Ioh 2. 19. Math. 12 22. Act. 19. 15.

Treason. I'me sure Reason declares it a Contradiction. For an *Ambassadour* is not an *Ambassadour*, till he hath his Commission sealed, nor a steward, a steward, till entrusted by the Master of the Family; neither may any man assume unto himself the honour and employment of a Priest, but he that is lawfully and externally called and designed unto the function, as was *Aaron*. Heb. 5.4.

As I shall not think the worse of my own coat, for that these boisterous times have worn it thred-bare, so God forbid I should be so strongly opinionated of it, as not to believe a secular man may have more gifts, and those more eminent, then ordinarily reside in an *Ecclesiastical person*, I know well, that every Christian (*quatenus* a Christian) is obliged to pray for, reprove, exhort, and instruct his Christian brother; & that whosoever shall convert a sinner from the error of his way (whether he be Laick or Ecclesiastick) shall hide a multitude of sins, and shall shine as the stars in the Firmament: and yet, though one star may differ from another in glory, light, and magnitude; yet every star is confined to its proper Sphere; otherwise they may fall under the censure of those wandering stars S. Iude speaks of, to whom is reserved the blackness of

Iam. 5. 20.

Dan. 12. 3.

of darkneſſe for ever. Iude 13. Every man by natural pity is obliged to help a ſheep out of a ditch, and yet every man is not by profeſſion a ſhepherd. Uriah may be a good King, and yet but a bad Prieſt. There is an apparent difference between a good man, and a good Citizen, (*a*) between a good Chriſtian; and a good Miniſter of holy things The Apoſtles rule is ſafe and good. Let every man abide in the ſame calling, wherein he is called; 1. Cor. 7. 20.

2. Chro. 26. 19.

(*a*) Ariſtotle.

In an Honourable Oeconomy, there may be divers ſervants of great eminency for their parts, and yet the ſteward (perhaps) may have the greateſt Truſt. And in a *Court Royal*, there is no neceſſity that he who keeps the *Seal*, ſhould alwayes write the faireſt Character. The *gifts*, and *adminiſtrations* of the ſame holy Ghoſt are divers, and all given to profit withal; and yet all are not Apoſtles, all are not Prophets. Abana, and Parphar; rivers of *Damaſcus* might (queſtionleſſe) have cured Naamans Leproſie, as well as Iordan, had the *Prophet Eliſha* ſent him thither; It was not the water, but the *Prophets benediction* did the Cure; which was not the leſſe Divine and miraculous, becauſe of no more difficulty, but barely to waſh and be clean. We have many now a daies

1. Cor. 12. 29.

of *Naamans* blind perſwaſion, that are highly offended if their ſpiritual cure be not effected their own way; They think nothing can be well done in the managery of *Gods Ordinances*, that is not performed with a great deal of difficulty and ſtraining, which enclines them very frequently to look more upon the weak inſtrument, then upon the Supreme Agent, in the work of Regeneration; and ſo far admire and dote upon the preachers gifts, that they forget they ever come from any Donor.

Whereas the Honour and Excellency of our Miniſtry, conſiſteth not ſo much in our gifts and endowments (For Paul *may plant, and Apollo may water; and yet no increaſe, unleſſe God give it:*) as in the mercy of God entailed upon our function, by vertue of certain peculiar promiſes and conceſſions, as *Whatſoever ye ſhall bind on earth, ſhall be bound in Heaven; and whatſoever ye ſhall looſe on earth, ſhall be looſed in Heaven.* Mat. 18.18. And *Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.* Mat. 28. 20. Which promiſes, do not extend to all Chriſtians at large, but only unto thoſe whoſe commiſſion runs in this form and tenor, *Go, and Teach all Nations, and Baptize them, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt.*

1. Cor. 3. 6.

So

So that those shepherds that come not into the sheepfold, those Labourers that come not into the Vinyard by the dore of Ordination, but climbe up, or creep in some other way: May justly be suspected to have ends and aimes as private and particular, as the way they run in is irregular and *un Apostolical*. And sure they come within the number of those seducers the Apostle speaks of that creep into houses, and lead captive silly women, laden with sins, led away with divers lusts; ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the Truth. 2. Tim. 3. 6. 7. So that having layd a false foundation, it is no wonder if their superstructure prove nothing else but rottenes, & Hypocrise.

Nor is my charge brought only against these wandring and irregular stars; But against other wavering and Apostate stars: such as (deserting their Orbe, like that star in the Revelation called wormwood,) have exceedingly imbittered our waters of affliction. These I must confesse (not without some bitternesse of spirit) came fairly in by the dore into the sheepfold, though afterwards they proved *hirelings* and *cowards*. And let no man wonder at it, for it is our *Saviors* own prediction, that immediatly before his second Rev. 8. 11.

Math. 24,29. coming the ſtars ſhould fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven ſhould be ſhaken, and S. John ſaw cleerly in a viſion, that a time would come when the tail of the dragon ſhould draw the third part of the ſtars from heaven, and caſt them unto the earth. Rev 12. 4, The Church will never be without her Demas-like Apoſtates, who cary more of 1. Tim. 1. 20. Mammon, then of Chriſt in their boſoms; and with *Hymæneus* and Alexander, will ſooner make ſhipwrack of their faith then their fortunes; as if thoſe many Text of ſelf-Denial, and forſaking all for Chriſts ſake, and his Goſpel, were meer Apocryphal, or to be expunged at pleaſure, and there were no ſuch thing as perſecution in the Church militant. Certainly, theſe men never ſate down and conſidered before their Ordination, what that ſacred engagement might coſt them, as the times might prove; and may juſtly be ſuſpected to have wanted much of that inward calling, which they outwardly profeſſed to have; and to have had their eyes more upon the *wages*, then upon the work of the Miniſtry. But as our Saviour will one day have a *Neſcio Vos*, for ſuch as ſhall plead, ſaying; Lord, have we not propheſied in thy name? And in thy name have caſt our Divels? And in thy name

name done many wonderful works? So will our dear (though deserted) mother the Church of England, have a *Nescio Vos* for that viperous brood, who in these Apostate times, have eaten their own way (or the way to their own ends) through that womb that bare them. Math. 7. 22.

In the mean time, however these men may esteem of themselves, or be esteemed of by others, they are not like to be reckoned among the *Lords Prophets*; their lot at best, will fall out to be but among the *peoples Prophets*; because they forge and forme their visions, (as some men do their *prognostications*) according to the humour, palate, and unstedinesse of these times: Now if the trumpet give an uncertain sound; who shall prepare himself unto the battel? If the Prophets steer according to the people, who shall be the peoples guides? If the blind lead the blind, both must certainly fall into the ditch. God commanded the Prophet Isaiah, to record it unto all posterity, That his people were a rebellious people, lying children, and such as would not hear the law of the Lord; Why; What was the reason? because they took upon them to prescribe unto the Prophets; saying unto the Seers, see not; and to the Prophets, prophesie not unto us right things, speak unto us 1. Cor. 14. 8.

smooth things, propheſie deceipt. The people were therefore ſaid to be incorgible, becauſe they were reſolved to entertain no *Prophets* but ſuch as ſhould varniſh over their foul ſpots with fair pretenſes, and ſcratch the itch of their rebellious humour. In the Prophet *Ieremies* time, there was the ſame combination & agreement between the *Prophets* and the people; and that this was no ſlight provocation, obſerve what a black mark the *holy Ghoſt* ſets upon it. *A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the Land;* The *Prophets propheſie falſly, and the Prieſts bear rule by their means, and my people love to have it ſo,* and *what will ye do in the end thereof?* And as this evil reigned under the *Law*, ſo that it ſhould reigne alſo under the *Goſpel*, we have *S. Pauls* expreſſe prediction. *The time will come* (ſaith he) *that men wil not endure ſound doctrine, but after their own luſts wil heap unto themſelves teachers, having itching ears. All Scripture is written for our Inſtruction,*

Ier. 5. 30. 31.

2. Tim. 4. 3.

These *ſmooth Prophets* are the great *Luminaries*, or rather *Idols* of our *Age* and *Nation*, adored and magnified by the blind unſteddy *multitude*, for no other reaſon that I can imagine, but for their ſympathizing correſpondency in *blindneſs* and inconſtancy. And truly, if there be

be any light at all in them, 'tis certainly, the light of the *glo-worm*, or *rotten-wood*; rather seems, then is so, by reason of the great darknesse wherein we are involved; Or rather, like those pernicious and misguiding lights, that cause a man to wander out of his way, which we call *Ignis Fatuus*, and *Ignis Lambens*, one of which you may fan and drive before you which way you please, and the other will follow you which way soever you part the ayr: Both are ductible, and pliant unto your will; and both will lead you out of your way, and cary you you know not where. These I call the *peoples Prophets*, whose doctrines are so loose and *Independent*; that you know not where to have them, and yet you have them at every turn; That steer in their propheſyings, sometimes according to the sense and dictate of a *secular Councel* or *Committee*; sometimes according to the face and Aspect of a *Cyfer Assembly*, sometimes according to the successe and atchievements of a traiterous and bloody *Military Combination*, sometimes according to the Itch and enclinations of their blind followers, by whom they subsist. Thus instead of squaring the Christians practise by the precepts of Gods word (which every wise, and regular builder ought to do) they

have borrowed a trick from Rome, to mint their doctrines, and cases of conscience, as may be most serviceable to their particular designs and Interests.

And I could wish they had borrowed only their fine spun Artifices from that Conclave; their Sophismes and distinctions from the Iesuite; and not (by their wilde and confused principles) have invited the very persons of *Priests* and Iesuites to incorporate and co-operate with them in their pernicious and destructive designs. For it is most certain, that these subtile and busie factors, have not only plowed with our heifers in their private Assemblies, but with the Calves of the people also; those Bulls of Basan, or rather Buls of Belial; whom pride, Ambition, and Covetousnesse, have rendered impatient of any yoke of Government, or of being confined to any Inclosure. The phrase is not intollerable, since it is the *Holy Ghosts* own *Dialect*; the one is *Sampsons*, Iudg. 14 18. The other the *Psalmists*, Psal. 68 30. But to return to the *Peoples Prophets*.

To say nothing of the unmeasurable Covetousnesse, and notorious Non-residence of those men, who in other times, were the fiercest declamers against these foul sins: Nor of their borrowlesse malice against their fellow Labourers; Ma-

Making a man a Delinquent for a word, and laying ſnares for him, that impartially reproveth in the gates. I ſhall paſſe by their injuries unto men, and only take notice of their injurious dealing and prevarication with the word of God, and conſequently with God himſelf; and that in two reſpects: Firſt, in their miſinterpreting of Scripture, and ſecondly in their miſapplying of Scripture; in both which reſpects, they have added much to the boldneſſe, and preſumption of the Hereticks of old, and the preſent Church of Rome they ſo much declame againſt. *Iſa.* 29. 21.

To produce ſome few inſtances of many, and firſt concerning their miſinterpreting of Scripture.

If Barack were the ſupreme Magiſtrate in Iſrael and Meroz were Curſed for not coming in to his aſſiſtance, in a day of great extremity and hazard; I wonder with what face our Prophets could ſo unanimouſly concur in making uſe of that Text, (*a*) to incite ſubjects to take arms againſt their Soveraign? If Peter were reprehended by Chriſt for drawing a ſword in defence of the moſt innocent cauſe, and perſon, that ever appeared in the world; it is very ſtrange that (of all other inſtances) that ſhould be made uſe of, to ſtrengthen (*a*) Iudg. 5. 23.

the

the doctrine of resisting the lawful Magistrate. It was a strange piece of confidence (to my apprehension) in the Presbyterian party, to turn those Canons, (or Canonical Texts) upon the Army, and their adherents, (*a*) (not long before the *Kings* murther) which they would never take notice of, whilst they were planted against themselves. I my self have heard out of the pulpit a passionate Declamation (*b*) against all Ceremonies whatsoever, and the Text alledged to prove the damnableness of them hath been only that Rev. 22 18. *For I testifie unto every man that heareth the words of the prophesie of this book, if any man shall add unto these sayings, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book.* As if the institution of a Ceremonie, or *Circumstance*, (without which no *external worship* can be performed; without which, no Church on earth ever did, or any assembly of men can appear in the *publike worship* and *service of God*) were an *Addition* to the *prophesie* of that Book, or to the *Doctrinal* part of the *Holy Scriptures*.

(*a*) See the letter subscribed by some of the *London* Ministers.

(*b*) Master *Grenhil*, at *Stepney*.

I wish from my heart, these men were (in this particular) as innocent, as the *Ceremonies* established in the *Church* of *England*; But he that shall seriously debate,

bate, within his own understanding, The unnatural interpretations, the false glosses, the unreasonable Inferences, which they have forced from some Texts of Scripture, only in favour of their own designes, shall have reason to suspect, they are very neerly allied unto those, who interpret *pasce oves, feed my sheep*, (that is) *Depose*, and murther Christian *Kings*. And *Quod unque solveritis*, and *whatsoever ye shall loose on earth*, &c. signifies the *Popes* power to dispence with all sorts of *Oathes, Vowes, Penalties, Censures Lawes*, even with the obedience of *Subjects*, to their *Soveraign* Lord and *King*. From such squeizings, and pressures of the *Sacred Oracles*, (God help us) I'me sure we have tasted a bitter potion, and if this be not to add unto Scripture, and consequently to incurre those plagues, which S Iohn declares to belong to so bold a sin, I know not what is.

Secondly, for their Misapplying of Scripture, or (rather) prevaricating with it. And here the field is so large, that I should exspatiate much beyond my Intendments, should I acquaint you; what horrid, and prodigious suggestions have been hinted unto the people, from some abused Texts: as particularly from that, Eccles. 4. 13. *Better is a poor,*

poor and wise child, then an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished &c. from that Isa. 30. 31. *Tophet is prepared of old yea for the king it is prepared*; from that Psal. 149 8. *To bind their Kings in chains, and their Nobles in links of iron*; from that Jer. 46. *Cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood.* In all which, our prophe s have been as grossly and unsoberly mistaken, as was that gentleman (who preaching to a great Congregation upon a day of humiliation, for unseasonable and rainy summer weather) made use of that Text, 1 Sam 12. 17. *Is it not wheat harvest to day? I will call unto the Lord, and he shall send thunder, and rain, that you may perceive and see, that your wickedness is great, which you have done in the sight of the Lord, in asking you a king,* And from thence concluded, that that unseasonable weather, which at that time threatned the wheat harvest, was sent for the peoples great wickedness in petitioning a Treaty with his Majesty. Sure it might have been a meditation more genuine, and agreeable to the day, to have remembred his Auditory; That God had justly sent an excessive moisture upon that earth which (out of Spiritual drunkennes and madness) we had moistned our selves for some yeers before

The summer 1648.

Quere, Whether it were not M. *Greenhill* in Stepny Church?

before, with our own Christian, Protestant, English blood.

For those that have been thus notoriously guilty of handling the word of God deceitfully: I wish them seriously to consider, that these pious frauds (for such perhaps they may believe them) are not only arguments of great Ignorance and unteddinesse in the profession of the Gospel, but of a very deep degree of hypocrisie and impiety; And that the reward and doom of such desperate dissembling is certain ruine and destruction; and for the proof of this, I shall only produce two Texts, the one is 2 Pet. 3. 16. *Some things (in S. Pauls Epistles) are hard to be understood, which they, that are unlearned, and unstable, wrest (as they do also the other Scriptures) unto their own destruction.* The other is 2 Tim. 3. 13. *But evil men and seducers, shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, & being deceived.* The frauds of an Impostor (however they may fail of their ends upon other men) shall be sure to return with mischief enough upon the head of him that practiseth them, and the final close of the seducer is his own certain seduction. They shall do well to consider, that the great red Dragon, and the old serpent, the divel, and the Beast (Antichrist) and the false

false Prophet, are all of a piece, and all of a chain, Rev. 16. 13. The bottomlesse pit is all their homes, their spirits are all unclean spirits, and indeed they have very little reason to pretend to the spirit of truth and holines, who thus notorriously abuse his sacred oracles, to their own particular ends and aims, as if the word of God (which ought to be the rule of faith, & a good life) were a rule of lead, to be bowed at pleasure, to our own licentious humors & inclinations.

But all this perhaps, may be thought to be a declamation as full of bitternesse as boldnesse. The false Prophets will declame against false prophets as fast as any; and if the appeal be made unto the people, 'tis more then probable, that
1 Kin. 22 Jer. 28. Zedechiah the false prophet, will have the better of Micaiah the true; Hananiah the false, will prevail over Ieremiah the true: The false prophets, as they carry the greatest confidence, so commonly the greatest plausibility with the people. We read in sacred Hystorie, that a man of God hath been mistaken in a man of God; The man of God that was sent to propheſie against
1 King. 13. 18. the Altar at Bethel, was deceived and abused by the old prophet that dwelt
1 Cor. 14 32. at Bethel. And although *the spirits of the Prophets are subject to the Prophets*; that

that is, subject to their examination and censure; yet we do not in these days, pretend to such a spirit of discerning, but that one prophet may be easily mistaken in another; And therefore it will concern us to look out for some *kriterion*, a character or mark, whereby we may receive satisfaction in this particular.

And certainly, we cannot have a better, then that which our Saviour hath left upon record, Mat. 7. 15. *Beware of false Prophets, which come to you in sheeps clothing, but inwardly they are ravning wolves.* Hypocrise, and cruelty or covetousnesse (for both are implyed in the wolvish disposition) are shrewd symproms of a false prophet; but this description is not concluding enough, and therefore its added v. 20. *By their fruits ye shall know them* But it may fal under a quere, what is here meant by *fruits?* for if by *fruits* in this place, we shall understand mens *actions* and *manners*, as they are expressed in the outward conversation, then this can be no good *kriterion*: for the lives of many orthodox and able preachers, may possibly be blemish'd with divers *frailties, impurities*, and *inadvertencies*; The truth of our doctrine doth not depend upon the integrity of our conversation: there may be Iacobs voice in the pulpit, and the rough

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rough

rough hands of Esau elsewhere; 'tis pos-
sible men may be exquisite instruments
of other mens conversion, and yet when
all is done, prove cast a-ways them-
selves, like *Noahs* Carpenters, that la-
bour'd with him in building of the Ark
and yet had not faith enough to go in
and be saved. And so on the contrary,
the frauds and fallacies of false Pro-
phets and seducers, are very frequently
varnished over with alms and austerity,
and exact strictnesse in the outward
conversation; damnable doctrines may
have a saint-like holinesse attending on
them. The Prophet Zachary tels us of
some Prophets (not unlike the Romish
Ecclesiasticks) that *wore a rough gar-
ment to deceive*; and yet in the day of
tryal, *every one of these Prophets should
be ashamed of their visions*, Zach. 13.4.
The Scribes and Pharisees were noto-
riously precise in their prayers, and fast-
ings, and tything of mint, annis, & cum-
min; and yet our Saviour tels his di-
sciples, that, *except their righteousnes*
Mat. 5. 20. *exceed the righteousnes of the Scribes
and Pharisees, they should not enter into
the kingdom of heaven.* 'Tis no strange
thing for subtle merchants to put the
fairest glosses upon their falsest wares;
and if we shall take our aym at the out-
ward conversation, the greatest Artist in
hypo-

hypocriſie may paſſe for the holieſt man of God; ſo that ye ſhall know them by their fruits, is not to be underſtood thus, ye ſhall know them by their works, or ye ſhal judge of their ſayings by their doings; but ye ſhall know them by their fruits, that is, by their doctrines; ye ſhall know them by ſuch fruits as their doctrines ſhall produce. And indeed, this was the infallible mark of a falſe Prophet under the Law, as appears Deut. 13.1,2. *If there ariſe among you a Prophet, or a dreamer of dreams and giveth thee a ſign, or a wonder, and the ſign and the wonder cometh to paſs, whereof he ſpake unto thee ſaying let us go after other gods and let us ſerve them,* &c. where the ſign of the falſe Prophet is not in the ſign, or the wonder, but in the perſwaſion to Idolatry; So that whenſoever we meet with a Prophet perſwading and enclining a people unto any apparent corruption in Religion or good manners; or whenſoever we meet with a doctrine, the deſign or application wherof is the promoting of ſedition and rebellion, to the prejudice of the peace and ſafety of any Church or Kingdom, we ſhall need no further witneſſe to conclude the deceit and impoſture of that falſe Prophet.

To come then to the touchſtone; do we

we meet with prophets that take away the touchstone from us, whereby all doctrines should be tryed and concluded? Do they cloyster up the Scripture (the certain rule of faith and a good life) & put the salvation of our souls upon an implicite faith, and a blind obedience? Do they assure us, that *ignorance is the mother of devotion*, and so consequently open a gap to all sad consequences, which commonly ensue upon the want of the knowledge of God in a land? Do we meet with prophets, that tell us, that *no faith is to be kept with heretick*, and so apparently introduce that foul sin of perjury & prevarication both with God and man? Do they discharge children of the duty they ow unto their parents, by vertue of some *Corban*, or perhaps some *monastick vow*, or Romish compliance? Do they discharge subjects of their duty of allegiance to their Soveraigne, by vertue of some popish dispensation, making the first commandment of God of none effect, through their own Traditions? Do we meet with prophets that dissolve Lawful Matrimony in some persons, and forbid it in others; when the Scripture expresly concludes it honourable in all? And do they in the mean time allow and tolerate abominable Stews and Brothels (those sinks of unclean-

Heb. 13. 4.

uncleanneſſe ;) not for conveniency, or neceſſity (as is pretended) but in truth and reality, for filthy lucre ſake ? We know what thoſe Prophets are, by the accurſed fruit that ſpring from theſe and the like doctrines ; it ſhall be no breach of charity in us, to conclude them in the number of falſe prophets ; and of theſe Prophets, we know where there are good ſtore, that walk the world in ſheeps clothing, with no ſmall power and plauſibility.

But to look nearer homewards ; Do we meet with Prophets (highly honoured in their own Country) that tell us, we may do evil at ſome times, that good may come thereon, in order to a reformation ; and ſo by conſequence, reſolve all chriſtian practiſe into good intendment, wherewith hell it ſelf is ſaid to be paved? Do they tell us, that God ſees no ſin in his *elect* ; and then (by a nimble & dextrous way they have of Sainting themſelves, and their own proſelytes) conclude and infer their Fornications and Adulteries to have no uncleanneſſe in them ; their ſacriledge and plunder, to be without theft : their jugling and diſſembling, pious frauds ; and their horrid and bloody murthers, to have the ſweet ſmelling ſavour of acceptable peace offerings ? Do we meet with

with Prophets that inform the people, that Kings (as well as Bishops) are antichristian; that the kingdom of Iesus Christ, is a spiritual Government, and that no temporal monarch hath any thing to do with it; That Kings instead of being prayed for (as Defenders of the faith, and protectors of the publike peace) may (without being deposed by the Pope) be murdered by their own subjects. That the design of the Gospel is division and a sword. That the best Patriots and preservers of the publike peace and liberty, are those men who are deepest perjured. That treason and rebellion is good service to God & the Commonwealth. That it ought to be acted upon the publike faith of the kingdom, and when it is acted, that it ought to be rewarded with publike thanks and acknowledgement in print. In a word, do we meet with prophets that tell the people, that the moral law is of no use or obligation under the Gospel; that there is an Evangelical necessity of weeding up the Tares, before the general harvest; that themselves are the good wheat, and that all men else are Tares, and the seed of the divel, that go about to hinder and obstruct so good a work; that the liberty of the Gospel may be stretched and extended to the acting

acting of any dictate arising from any private perſwaſion of ſpirit (how blind and abominable ſoever) and that the baniſhment, impriſonment, and murder of Chriſts own Ambaſſadors, is the beſt way to promote his ſervice. By theſe, and the like doctrines (which I would not have expoſed to publike view, had not a neceſſity enforced it) we may gueſſe what theſe prophets are. And that I do not injure them by traducing their doctrine, their own ſermons and diſcourſes, together with the peoples practiſe grounded thereupon, is a clear and ample declaration of their preachers principles. And now let all the world judge by the fruits we have reaped of late yeers from theſe mens Doctrines; whether theſe are the ſervants of Ieſus Chriſt, and the way they have gone, be agreeable to his Goſpel or not. Or rather, whether theſe are not thoſe wolves in ſheeps clothing he hath forewarn'd us of; whether theſe are not the peoples prophets, nay the divels prophets, whoſe tongues have been ſet on fire of hell, to ſet the world all in a conflagration. And 'tis very obſervable, how God hath brought the way of theſe jug'lers and diſſemblers upon their own head; Before, they would not preach, or pray, according to duty and Conſci-

conscience; but as the current of the times enclined them; and now they cannot, at least, I'm sure they dare not. For as it was decreed in our Saviours time, That *if any man should confess Christ, he should be put out of the Synagogue*; so if any man shall now preach or pray for K. *Charls* II. as his undoubted lawful Soveraign, he shall not be put out of the Synagogue or Assembly, but out of the world too, if he look not the better to it. So that our desolate and decayed Jerusalem (*having drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of his fury, & the dregs of the cup of trembling*) may justly complain with the Prophet Isaiah, *That*

Isa. 51. 17, 18. *there is none, or at least very few, to guide her among all the sons that she hath brought forth; neither is there any that taketh her by the hand, of all the sons that she hath brought up*; But instead of ministring any comfort or advice in the day of her calamity, *the leaders of the people have caused them to err, and they*

Isa. 9. 16. *that are led of them are destroyed.*

The truth is, the unparalleld mischief which these blind leaders of the blind have done; the strange boldnesse wherein they have proceeded; together with the general belief and adherence of the people, hath enforced me to dwell so long upon so rotten and corrupted a subject;

ſubject. But I ſhall now leave theſe prophets to their repentance, and a ſincere deteſtation of their deep impiety, only I ſhall make ſome ſhort uſe of it, in reference and relation to our ſelves.

And now (having given you an ample diſcovery of the falſe prophets of theſe irregular times) I ſuppoſe you are highly enraged and incenſed againſt them, you look upon them as the firebrands of hell, the cauſers of all our miſeries, that no puniſhment can be ſevere enough for ſuch pernicious inſtruments, and what would you not do to bring them to condigne puniſhment? but ſoft and fair, *The wrath of man worketh not the righteouſnes of God*, Though I have not ſpared them in painting them out in their proper colours, yet ſo far am I from incenſing the people, or any kind of authority againſt them, that I ſhal deſire & conjure both the one and the other, to quarrel with themſelves, & the corruptions of their own boſoms, as with the juſt and natural cauſe of the inſincerity and depravity of their prophets. Jam. 1. 20.

Two ways God was wont to expreſſe his diſpleaſure againſt his people, in reſpect of prophets. Sometimes *by ſending them no Prophets*: This was the ground of the Pſalmiſts complaint, concerning the deſolation of the Sanctuary. *They*

have burnt up all the houses of God in the land; we see not our tokens, there is not one Prophet more among us Ps. 74. 8, 9. Sometimes by *suffering them to be abused and deluded by false Prophets*: For as (in the Civil Government) in the multitude of Councellors, and laws, there may be peace and safety, so in the multitude of Councellors and laws, there may be a snare, and a curse upon a people; for they may be mercenary Councellors, such as Ezra speaks of; & they may be *Statuta insalubria*, such as Ezekiel speaks of. So is it in the church in respect of her Prophets, it is not the number, but the quality of them that is to be looked after; It was a promise of great mercy which God made unto his people by the Prophet Jeremy, *I will give you Pastors according to mine heart which shall feed you with knowledge & understanding* Not Pastors according to your heart, that had been a judgement; but Pastors according to my heart. As good no Pastors, as no good Pastors; nay, better no labourers, then pernicious labourers in the Lords vinyard. The paucity and insincerity of Prophets, are both alike the judgement of God upon a people.

Prov. 11. 14.

Ezr. 4. 5.

Ezek. 20. 25.

Jer. 3. 15.

Now this is to be laid for a ground, That the corruption and insincerity of the

the Prophets (under the juſt anger of God) takes it riſe from the corruption and inſincerity of the people. So that (to come to the root of our errors and miſcarriages) it is moſt certain, that before ever the ſeducer got into the pulpit, or to the tables end; there was a more dangerous ſeducer gotten into the heart. In one man avarice was a concealed preacher to the ſoul; in another ambition, in a third, diſcontent; in a fourth, revenge; in a fift, pride, and a deſire of goverment, in a fixt, novelty, and a deſire of change of government; in ſome one, in ſome more, in ſome all of theſe, in ſome more then all of theſe (like the ſeven divels in Mary Magdalen) kept the intire poſſeſſion of the ſoul; ſo that our hearts being ſeaſoned and prepared by theſe and the like corrupt and vile affections; it was very agreeable to the juſtice of God, to give way, that ſuch Prophets ſhould be ſent among us, as were moſt ſutable to theſe particular itching humors and prediſpoſitions.

So that as (in the natural conſtitution) when the ſtomack is burdned with any noxious and offenſive humor, that is there predominant over other humors; the Appetite being governed by that predominancy, declines thoſe meats which are moſt wholſom and nutritive,

and longs after those which are more unhealthy and destructive; Just so is it with the spiritual appetite, if that be wanton, or corrupted by the malignity of any deliberate and resolved wickedness, it does neither approve nor digest the *sincere milk of Gods word*, but (loathing that Divine Manna) it looks out for new devised meats and sauces, that is, in the Apostles phrase, new fangled doctrines and opinions; such as for their novelty or complyance, are most palatable and pleasing to our corrupt and licentious enclinations.

Æger animus falsa pro veris videt.

This is that dangerous evil which the Scripture calls the *setting up a stumbling block of iniquity in the heart*, whereof we have a clear and uncontroulable instance, Ezek. 14. 3 *Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart and put the stumbling block of their iniquity before their faces, should I be enquired of at all by them?* These men, & who were these men? *The Elders of Israel*, v. 1. Therefore the rule is set, v 4. *Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the Prophet; I the Lord will answer him that cometh, according to the multitude of his Idols.*

And

And if the Prophet be deceived (at any time) *when he hath ſpoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that Prophet*, v. 9. and wherefore is all this? ſee v. 5 *That I may take the houſe of Iſrael in their own heart*, that is, in the ſnare of their own heart, *becauſe they are all eſtranged from me through their Idols.*

Let the Saint-like ruling Elders therefore of our Iſrael look well to it. For if they reſolve before hand, *to decree unrighteous decrees, to write griefvouſneſs, which themſelves have preſcribed*; and to deal trecherouſly with God and man (which I need not ſpeak by ſuppoſition) They do but ſet up a pernicious Idol in their own boſoms, a fatal ſtumbling block before their own faces; and notwithſtanding their dayly preparatives by prayer and preaching, for aſſiſtance in councel (wherein they would ſeem to the world, to be very careful to enquire at Gods mouth) yet the Prophet Iſaiah is poſitive, if they will chuſe their own ways, their own counſels, God *will chuſe their deluſions, will bring their fears upon them*, and will anſwer them according to the ſnares and prevarications of their own falſe hearts. And then what will becom of all their pretended ſanctity and devotion? Truly, their many Invocations Iſa. 10. 1. Iſa 66 4.

will prove but as so many provocations,
Isa 65.3. nay as so many abominations in the sight of God. Their many prayers and sermons will but stand as a cloud of witnesses one day to condemn them of their secret Atheism and Hypocrise. So that if our Prophets have been like foxes in the desarts, as they were in Ezekiels time; it is because our Elders have been like wolves in sheeps clothing, as were the Scribes and Pharisees in our Saviours time. If the prophets have kindled the fire, the people have contributed the fuel and matter, to so great and miserable a conflagration.

And indeed, this rottennesse at the core, is that pestilent corruption, which hath so visibly ensnared the Church of Rome into so many grosse delusions;
Matth: 16. 18. because, notwithstanding all pretenses of infallibility, borrowed from a mistaken promise of our Saviour; notwithstanding all their solemn addresses, and preparatives by prayer and fasting; the Conclave assemblies, fill'd with selected agents, whose business there, is not so much the discovery of divine Truth, as the Pre-resolved design of minting and venting such adulterate coyn under that stamp of authority, as may be most serviceable to the establishment and enlargement of the dominion and tyranny of that See.

This

This insincerity of spirit (the secret breath of antichrist) when it gets into the representatives of the Church (as it may do, because we are sure it hath done) puts a foul cheat upon God and the world, in that language of *Visum est Spiritui sancto & nobis. It seemeth good to the holy Ghost, & to us*, &c. when the truth is, 'tis *Visum est interesse nostro, & non Spiritui sancto; It seemeth good to us and not to the holy Ghost.* And for the foul spots and blemishes of particular interest and advantage, the Councels of after ages never arrived to that reputation and honour; which the whole Catholick Church acknowledg'd to be due to the first four general Councels, for that candour and integrity which was so visibly wanting in that famous stratagem of Rome, the Councel of Trent. For the promise of the holy Ghosts assistance, is confined neither to S. Peters chair in Rome, nor to any assembly of men whatsoever, any otherwise, then the sincerity of their hearts in seeking after truth, puts them into a capacity to receive it. So that that hypocrise, which is of the finest spinning, and disguised with the fairest glosses upon it, is ever the most serviceable expedient to the designs and ayms of our grand Adversary the Devil: and that glistering piety Act. 15. 25.

which is only plauſible in appearance, & deſign'd only to dazle mens eys; is ugly & abominab'le in the ſight of God.

And becauſe our times are fouly ſuſpected to ſavour ſtrongly of this ſecret leven of hypocriſie; I ſhall preſent ye with one of the moſt remarkable pieces of a painted Sepulcher, and well coloured rottenneſſe, that I find mention'd in ſacred Scripture, and that is Iſa. 58. 1, 2. where the Prophet is commanded, ſaying, Cry aloud, ſpare not, lift up thy voice like a Trumpet, & ſhew my people their tranſgreſſion, and the houſe of Jacob their ſins; Yet they ſeek me daily, ſaith God, and delight to know my ways, as a Nation that did righteouſnes, and forſook not the ordinance of their God; they ask of me the ordinance of juſtice, and take delight in approching to God. And yet this goodly pile of external piety, was laid upon no other, but the rotten foundation of a diſſembling heart; and therefore required the loudeſt and moſt Trumpet-like voice of a Propher, to reprove it. And as the ſin was of a ſtrange complexion, that ſo much rottennes ſhould lodg under ſuch a ſpecious diſguiſe, ſo the God of truth & ſincerity, appears againſt this ſin in a very remarkable way of threatning, as appears Iſ. 29. 13. *For aſmuch as this people*

ple draw neer to me with their mouth, & with their lips honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, & their fear toward me, is taught by the precept of men. Therefore behold I wil proceed to a marvellous work amongst this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder; For the wisdom of their wise men shal perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shal be hid: and then follows, *Wo to them that seek deep to hide their councel from the Lord, & their works are in the dark, and they say, who sees us? and who knows us? Surely your turning of things upside down, shal be esteemed as the potters clay,* &c. But if these texts shall be thought only to be of Iewish concernment, and to be lookt on only as an Almanack of a yeer, that is come & gone; we have a parallel to these in S. Pauls prediction, directed to Timothy, 2 Tim. 3. 1. &c. *This know also, that in the last days, perilous times shal come. For men shal be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good. Traytors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasures, more then lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof,* &c.

What a world of wickedneſs does here march under the garb and diſguiſe of the moſt ſaint-like godlineſs.

So that, if God (out of his juſt indignation againſt a ſtubborn and falſhearted people) *hath ſuffered contempt to be poured out upon his anoynted, and hath weakned the ſtrength of the mighty*; which was once the condition of a *man after his own heart. If he hath taken away the underſtanding of the aged, and removed the ſpeech of the truſty. If he hath taken away from our Ieruſalem the mighty man, and the honourable, the the Iudge, & the Prophet the prudent & the ancient, and inſteed of theſe, given children for Princes, and babes to rule over us. If he hath ſuffered the child to behave himſelf proudly againſt the ancient, the baſe againſt the honourable, and the people to be oppreſſed every one by another* (which is an accurſed condition, as full of torment and vexation to an ingenious ſpirit, as of abſurdity & confuſion. *If he hath mingled a perverſe ſpirit in the midſt of us*, delivered us up to *ſpiritual drunkenneſs and madneſs*, and blaſted all our Treaties, perhaps for the ſecret inſincerity of our ſpecious diſguiſes. If he hath ſuffered our people to be eaten up like bread, our blood to be made as cheap as water, our metropolis

Iob 12. 21.

v. 20.

Iſa. 3. 3, 4, 5.

Iſa. 19. 14.

Ier. 13. 13.

to

to become a portion for fozes, our ſtately pallaces and Temples, to be a quarter for horſes, or a receptacle for thieves and rebels; and the overflowings of ungodlines to proceed ſo far, as to quench the light of our Iſrael, by taking away the joy of our hearts, and the breath of our noſtrils, in the life of our Soveraign. And notwithſtanding all this, *hath cloſed the eys of our Prophets and rulers, with the ſpirit of a deep ſleep of ſenſleſneſs & ſecurity* (which is the map of our preſent miſery and confuſion) ſure there is great wrath gone out from the Lord againſt us, it concerns every man to enquire after the ſecret *Achan* of his own boſom, there is great reaſon to ſuſpect we are under the immediate power and enchantment of a general Infatuation. Iſa. 29. 10.

And therefore, ſince the firſt ground and bottom of infatuation is from a ſtumbling block of our own laying, in the ſecret depravities and reſervations of the heart; Let the people no longer charge the errors and infelicities of the times on the prophets, nor the prophets on the people; but let all look well into our ſelves, and we ſhall find matter of high provocation, both in the prophets and in the people. And therefore laying aſide all bitterneſſe and evil ſpeakings againſt each other; Let us turn

our

our charges and clamours into prayers for each other; the people for the prophets, that they may be more faithful & sincere in the administration and execution of their sacred function; and the prophets for the people, that they may be more diligent in knowing, and more conscionable in practising what is delivered unto them out of the sacred Oracles; the people for the prophets, that they may be burning and shining lamps in the sanctuary of God; and the prophets for the people, that they may be translated from the kingdom of darkness into the glorious light and liberty of the sons of God. That so both people and prophets may twist and concur in their utmost endeavours, to *work out their own salvation with fear and trembling*; and both be brought nearer to God, to *serve him acceptably, with reverence and godly fear*.

Phil. 2. 12.

To all these instruments of Infatuation, I shall add but one more, and that I take to be expressly set down in the Text; namely, *The sincere preaching of the good word of God. Go first, and tell this people*; and afterwards, *make the heart of this people fat*; that is, deliver my message sincerely unto this people, though I know before-hand they will grow more obstinate and obdurate upon the

the hearing of it. The prophet *Isaiah* compares the word of God to *Rain* and *Snow*; *As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither; but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be, that goeth out of my mouth, it shall not return unto me void*, &c. And yet, as the same frosty, snowy weather, that is health to the sound; is a burthen to the weak and crazy Constitution; As the same refreshing shower which bringeth up the grasse and corn, bringeth up the weeds and tares also: So the same good word of God never returns in vain; *our Labour cannot be in vain in the Lord*; It may be *in vain*, in respect of your *conversion*; It will not be *in vain*, in respect of your *Conviction*. It may be *in vain*, in respect of your *humiliation*; It will not be *in vain*, in respect of your *Obduration*. It may be *in vain*, in respect of your *Regeneration*, and *Salvation*; It will not be *in vain*, in respect of your *Iudgement* and *Condemnation*. Moses was assured before-hand from the mouth of God himself, that all his embassies and transactions with *Pharaoh* should produce no other effect but to render him more obstinate and resolved

Isa. 55. 10. 11.

1. Cor. 15. 15. 1.

not

not to subscribe to the command of God, in the dismission of his people; yet Moses is sent unto him, that the hardnesse of Pharaohs heart, as well as the greatnes of Gods power, might be known unto the world. There was *message* upon *message*, (and if these were not enough,) there was *miracle* upon *miracle*, and (if these concerned him not,) there was *plague* upon *plague*; like wave upon wave, beating upon himself, his servants, and the whole Nation of the *Egyptians*; and yet (notwithstanding all this) we find the heart of *Pharaoh* hardned into a proverb, and an instance of an obdurate spirit unto all posterity.

What shall we say then? *Is there unrighteousnesse with God* in sending *Prophets* to the ruin of a people? Is there *mors in olla*? Is there death in the *Prophets* pot? Is there poyson in the sincere milk of *Gods word*? I shewed before, that corruption in the hearts of the people, might occasion corruption in the prophets, but can the stench and infection of that corruption, extend it self so far as to taint the good word of God? No certainly; Let God be true, though every man a Lyar; and let his word be ever sacred and immutable, though all the world should be convicted and con-

condemned by it Heaven and earth shall passe away, but his word shall not passe away; that is (according as the scripture comment else where) *The heavens shall passe away as a scroul when it is rouled together*, and *the Elements shall melt with fervent heat*; This goodly Ball of Earth shall be crumbled into nothing, and all the gaudy vanities we so much dote on) shall passe away like a smoke: But not one *jot* or *tittle* of that word which may save, and must judge us, shall passe away or be changed. And therefore to prevent any mistake that may arise in a businesse of so great concernment; It may not be impertinent to shew, *first*, the innocent Quality of Gods word in its own nature. *Secondly*, The different operation of this word *per accidens*, in some hearers. *Thirdly*, The Reason of this different operation. *Fourthly*, what Cautions and Counsels may be needful to prevent its hardning quality in our selves.

Rev. 6. 14. 2. Pet. 3. 10.

First, that we may have no quarrel against the preaching of the word, (what ever exception lies against the preachers) we must know; The *word of God* is alwaies *good seed*; what ever the ground be wherein it is sown The *Doctrine of the scripture* is alwaies sin ere milk, what ever the stomack be where-

Mark. 4. 1. Pet. 2. 2. Heb. 5. 14.

in

in it is received. The mysteries of the Gospel are alwaies strong meat, what ever the constitution be that should digest it; and what ever may be inferred, either from the doctrine and practise of the Church of *Rome*, to draw contempt upon that Sacred ordinance of preaching; or from the vilany and infelicity of these times, wherein all Religion seems to be resolved into hearing, and our English Nation (without the hands of a Bishop) turned all into Ecclesiasticks; yet I dare affirm, the natural life may as well be sustained without the supply of our daily bread; as that Grace (the life of the soul) can (without a miracle) either increase, or be preserved without the constant nourishment of this *Heavenly manna*. S. Paul makes the preaching of the word one of the main hinges whereupon our Salvation depends; First, he lays this down for a ground (which he derives from the Prophet Ioel. *Whosoever shall Call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved*: And from thence he argues thus; *How then shall they call on him, in whom they have not believed?* and *how shall they believe on him, of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent?* (that is)

Ioel 2, 32.
Rom 10. 13-14.

law-

lawfully and Eccleſiaſtically ordained and appointed thereunto.

The *Goſpel* of *Chriſt* is *the great power of God unto Salvation*; The buſineſſe of our miniſtry is nothing elſe but a ſpiritual negotiation for your peace and atonement; and the word we preach (when we ſpeak as we ought to ſpeak) is a *word of truth*, wherein you cannot be deceived; in us you may, in it you cannot: It is a *word of Grace*, not only *Originaliter*, as deſcending unto you from the fountain of all Grace; but *Effective*, a fruitful word, in begetting Grace in the heart: *It is a word of promiſe*; wherein you have the riches of Gods mercy, like unto a cabinet of invaluable jewels, laid open and preſented to your own choiſe and acceptation; and it is a *word of faith* too; that helps you to an hand, whereby you are able to lay hold on thoſe precious and ſoul ſaving promiſes. It is a *word of Reconciliation*, when you are at variance with God; when you have ſinned your ſelves out of his favour and protection; and want an expedient to take up the difference. It is a *word of Salvation*; when you are ready to ſink under the burden of your own guilt and deſperation: It is a word of comfort and aſſurance of Gods favour in the moſt tempeſtuous and

Eph. 1. 13.

Eph. 1. 13. Act. 14. 3

Rom 9. 9

2. Cor. 5. 19.

Act. 13. 26.

and stormy weather of affliction ; a word of Consolation, in the houre of death ; and when this bubble life shall expire, you shall then find it by experience, to be a word of Eternal life.

Ioh. 6. 68 So that as S Paul reasons in another case, concerning the Law ; That though the law might be the Instrument of sin and of Death, and Condemnation; yet God forbid (saith he) that I should conclude any otherwise, but that *the law is blameless*, and *the Commandment* Rom. 7. 12. *holy, and just, and good*: so, God forbid we should complain of the good word of God, as of a killing letter ; because some hearts are already dead in trespasses and sins. God forbid we should complain of the light of the sun, because some mens sore eyes are offended at its brightnesse and lustre, God forbid we should complain of the wholsom favour of this Celestial salt, because some mens wounds and galled Consciences cannot endure the sharp and searching quality of it.

But as it fared with the Christians in some persecutions, when ever the Heathens were oppressed with any calamity, the general clamour and vogue of the people was presently, *Christianos ad Leones*; away with the Christians to the Lyons ; or, as it was the blind and

Bedlam

Bedlam clamour of the bewitched multitude at *Weſtminſter*, to cry out for *Iuſtice* and *Execution* againſt his Sacred Majeſty of incomparable memory; as if his innocent and pious life, which now too late they ſee, was under the Divine goodneſſe, the life of the Kingdoms peace and felicity; had been the obſtruction of it. So, is it very uſual with *Tom fool*, and *Tom a Bedlam*, being ſmitten or angred by another; to ſtrike him that ſtands next to him, or like peeviſh and crazy patients, who are wont to cry out upon the phyſitian, and medicaments; becauſe they themſelves are perverſe, and will not take them; or their ſtomacks crude and corrupt, that they cannot digeſt them. Thus we have ſeen a *wicked and adulterous Generation*, (from ſome errors in ſome *Biſhops*) conclude that excellent and *Apoſtolique order* to be *Antichriſtian*. Thus we ſee men daylie rave in their mad fits, and cry out (with the prieſt and theIeſuite,) ye ſee what comes of ſo much preaching; as if the errors and exorbitancies of ſome preachers, could with any reaſon or Iuſtice be faſtned upon that Sacred ordinance of preaching. Certainly, there could be no religion left remaining in the world if the bare abuſe of what is Sacred and Salubrious, ſhould take

take away the lawful use of it; then must we discard our *Sacraments*, as well as *Sermons*; and our *Bible*, as well as both: for these (God help us) are daylie much abused by Hypocrites and profane persons. No, let us ever blesse God for this, and all other means of Grace and spiritual advantage; and let it be our wisdom and care to make such use of them whilst we have them, as that we never provoke him to deprive us of them; and how severely soever the word of God, or his ministers may deal with us, or our dearest sins; yet let us ever give it old Elys esteem and entertainment, *God is the word which the Lord hath spoken*, though it should bring a Curse upon our selves or families.

We are now in the next place, to look upon the different operation, and effect which the good word of God produceth in the hearts of men. We read in *Ezra* 3. that when the Iews returned from Babylon, by the favour and permission of *Cyrus*, to build again the Temple at Ierusalem; it is said, that many of the standers by, *wept with a loud voyce*, when the foundation was layd: and *many shouted aloud for joy*. The act of Building was the same, and the persons were all equally concerned in it, as in the restauration of their religion;

Ezra 3. 12.

and

and yet see what contrary passions in their extremities are derived from the same object. The Crucifixion of our blessed Saviour was so sad a spectacle, that the Sun in the Firmament seemed to turn away from beholding it; and yet its observable, what a strange and different operation this dismal object wrought in the minds of the two thievs. The one rayls on him, as if he had been a murtherer; the other adores and confesseth him to be the strong God of his Salvation. It was the same body of ayr that was cleer and serene in Goshen, and condensed into palpable darkness over all the land of Egypt It was the same bulk of water, that was a wall of protection and preservation unto the *Israelites*; and a grave and destruction unto the *Egyptians*. It was the same Identical fire that warmed *Shadrach Meshak* and *Abednego*, and that burnt up those instruments of Cruelty that cast them into the furnace The Truth is, the preaching of the word doth not only harden, but declare & discover the despisers of those Sacred messages to be already hardned For as it is the same glasse that shews deformities, as well as good features; the same touchstone, that discernes the pure gold, from what is false and counterfeit; So it is the same

peir-

peircing word of God that distingui-
sheth the sound and sincere christia
from the hollow, rotten, and dissem-
bling *hypocrite*. *Herodias* might have
passed all her life long for an Eminen
and glorious professor of the faith, had
not *Iohn the Baptist* declared her mat-
ching with *Herod* to be incestuous and
abominable. The *Scribes* and *Pharisees*
(what with their long prayers, and
what with their specious pretences)
might have devoured widows houses
to the worlds end, had not our *Saviour*
by his doctrine detected their fine spun
frauds and Artifices. We read Act. 13.
that immediatly after the preaching of
the word at Antioch; the Iewes stirred
up the devout and honourable women
of that place, and raised persecution
against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled
them out of their Coast Act. 13. 50.
How? *Paul* and *Barnabas* persecuted, and
expelled the city by devout and ho-
nourable women? It seems the women of
those times were as unhappily busie in
medling with *Clergy matters*, as they
have been in ours. But sure, it was not
honour, much lesse devotion, to perse-
cute and expel *Christs* own *Ambassa-
dours*, who had no other businesse with
them, more then to make their peace
and reconciliation with God.

And

And therefore let no man wonder, if the world rave, and rayl at us, and our miniſtry; if they make every blot in our lives, every miſtake in our words, the matter of their mirth, and an encouragement unto licentiouſneſſe; nay, if they ſlander and traduce us, only to make us vile and contemptible in the eys of thoſe we would preſerve from the bottomleſſe pit. He that was without the leaſt ſpot or defilement of ſin in himſelf, yet when he came to reprove the ſins of the times, was called *a Glutton, a winebibber, a friend of Publicans and ſinners, a Samaritan, a Divel, a Beelzebub* and *Prince of the Divels*. He that ſpake as never man ſpake, (his enemies themſelves being judges,) had a Iudas, a Trayror, a Divel trained up in his own ſchool and family. And he that from a poor *fiſherman*, was made a *fiſher of men*; and that thrived ſo well in that ſacred employment that he gained 3000. ſouls to the Chriſtian faith at one ſermon, and 5000. at another; after all his pains, had his thanks given him in a threatning, and his payment made him in a priſon. Act. 4. 3. So that, as it is the warmth and influence of the ſame ſun, that cheriſheth and produceth the good fruits of the Earth; and at the ſame time, hatcheth the Cockatrices eggs,

Matt. 17. 19.

Act. 2. 41

Act. 4. 4.

eggs, and produceth a generation of vipers; as it is the same sun, that at the same time, melts the wax, and hardens the clay: So the same holy ordinance of preaching, may at the same time, be a coming together for the better unto some; and to others a coming together for the worse. The same Sacramental bread and wine, which is the spiritual nourishment of one man; may be the bane and poyson of anothers soul; and the same good word of God, which is to one man, the savour of life unto life; may be unto another, the savour of death unto death.

I know this is *durus sermo*; an hard saying; and may seem very strange to some mens apprehensions. That the glorious light of the Gospel (instead of being the *medium* of *Illumination*) should become the fatal instrument of the grossest darknesse; and those means of grace, which by the wisdom and goodnesse of God are appointed for edification; should becom the means of irrecoverable ruine and destruction; and therefore in the third place, we are to enquire into the ground and reason of so strange and different an operation arising from the sacred oracles.

It hath been laid as a ground already, that we cannot (without apparent in-

injury and blaſphemy) impute any noxious or offenſive quality to the good word of God. The fault is not in the word, that's moſt certain; if it be any where, it muſt be in the hearers. And truly, the Apoſtle Paul does very clearly ſet forth the ground of this doctrine 2 Cor. 4. 3. *If our Goſpel be hid* (ſaith he) *it is hid unto thoſe that are loſt; In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, leſt the light of the glorious Goſpel of Chriſt, who is the image of God, ſhould ſhine unto them.* And this the Apoſtle knew by his own experience; for having preach'd to a congregation in Rome from morning until evening, it is ſaid, *that ſome believed the things that were ſpoken, and ſome believed them not*, Act. 28. 24. And therefore he there urgeth this very text of the prophet Iſaiah, againſt the unbelievers of his Congregation. *Well ſpake the holy Ghoſt by Iſaiah the Prophet unto our fathers, ſaying, Go unto this people and ſay, Hearing ye ſhall hear, and ſhall not underſtand, &c.* So that the reſult is no more but this; the want of faith excludes hearing; and the God of this world (being prepoſſeſſed of the heart) excludes faith. What the God of this world is, S. John tels us in expreſs terms. *All that is in the world, the luſts*

Act. 28. 26.

1 John 2. 15.

of the flesh, and the lusts of the eys, and the pride of life, is not of the father, but is of the world. And how the God of this world may be overcom, he tels us also. *Whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith* So that if faith be predominant, the God of this world is excluded; and if the God of this world be predominant in the soul, faith, and all other saving graces are excluded.

1 John 5. 4.

I have said before, that corruption & depravity in the peoples hearts, had very frequently an unwholsom influence upon the prophets tongues; but such is the corruption and perverseness of these times, that were Moses, and Samuel, and Elijah, and all the unerring prophets of God among us; they would not work some mens hearts into any reasonable obedience. What's the reason? because the hearts are already prepossed. There is mammon, a covetous worldly devel; and there is Bacchus, a swinish drunken devel; and there is Venus, a lascivious uncleen devel; & there is revenge, a raging foming devel. These and many more, have taken possession of the soul, insomuch that there is no room for any Evangelical guest; so that would you know the reason why our sermons

sermons are *duri sermones, hard sayings?* it is from *dura corda*, because your hearts are hard hearts: *Totum durum est, quicquid imperatur invitis.* Every thing is hard and severe to a man that hath no inclination to obey; *Quot genera præceptorum, tot adversariorum.* So many precepts as we find in the Decalogue; so many enemies hath the carnal and licentious liver. Such is the power and predominancy of deliberate and resolved wickedness, that men had rather deny the Gospel it self, then themselves, and their own destructive lusts. *Malunt execrari legem, quam emendari mentem.* they had rather the Law it self were abolished & accursed; then their own ungodly minds reformed; & bear a greater hatred to the clear commands of God, then to their own vileness; so that *Cui animus perversus est; nec Moses nec Prophetæ, nec unus e mortuis prodest.*

Nor is this all the damage or miscariage, That our preaching is in vain to such men, and the good seed lost, because the stony ground will not suffer it to take root; no, the mischief of all mischiefs is, the good seed is lost, and the stony ground becomes more stony: not *hearing, and no understanding*, as in the text; but here is hearing turned into

hardning; not stones chang'd into bread (as was once expected from our Saviour) but here is bread changed into stones; the bread of life, and the food of the soul, changed into putrefaction, and obduratenesse of spirit. And now if any man shal ask me, Sir, I pray resolve me, what do you think is the reason why my heart is so refractory and impenetrable after the hearing of so many good sermons, after so many solemn applications to the means of grace, &c. Truly Sir, my answer must be, because you have heard so much, to so little purpose. Every sermon you have heard, every convincement you have checkt & repulsed, is one blow more upon the Anvil of your heart; and the oftner or the longer you have been in the furnace of affliction, without refining and reforming the error of your mind, the the more you are hardned to your own destruction. And that I do not speak this of my self, I shall give you authority for it; & I shall make my instance in those Gentils S Paul speaks of, Rom. 1. who (certainly) were not without the knowledge of God, for it is said, v. 21. *Because when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, but held the truth of God in unrighteousnes*, v. 18. *therefore God gave them up unto uncleanes*, v. 24.

and

and *even, as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, so God gave them over to a reprobate mind*, v. 28. how far their mind was reprobate, we learn v. *ult.* Who knowing the judgement of God (that they which commit such things are worthy of death) not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them. The Scribes & Pharisees had so great a prejudice against our Saviours doctrine, and such a malicious hatred against his person, & the growth of his Gospel; that they resolved beforehand, if any man should confesse him to be the Christ, he should be put out of the Synagogue. And this they execute upon a poor man, who (being born blind) was guilty of no other crime, but of having the eys of his body, and of his mind, both opened together by a miracle. And so far were they from being converted by his gracious words and miracles; that they resolve to put Lazarus to death (who had been an instance of his power and mercy) for no other reason, but that because of him, many of the Iews went away, & believed on Iesus. I cannot imagine what should be the reason that men are grown so liberal of their excommunications & executions both in England & Scotland, unlesse it be upon

John 12. 11.

some Iewish principle, because they either will not, or cannot see their own blindnesse and seduction.

Of such as these doubtlesse our Saviour speaks, Ioh 2.30. for judgement am I come into this world, that they which see not might see; and they which see, might be made blind. There is a strange spirit of slumber fallen upon this age: a deep sleep from the Lord (I fear) hath seized those, who brag of nothing more then of strange visions and revelations from God. And most justly, for when men are resolved aforehand to rebel against the light, as Iob speaks, Iob 24. 13. & with the Pharisees and Lawyers, to reject the counsel of God against themselves, Luk. 7. 30. It is just with God to seal up their eys, that they shall never receive the benefit of another convincement, to bow down their backs alway, that they shall never look up to heaven more, with any comfortable assurance of mercy; & to make that word of his, which is a piercing word, dividing asunder between the joynts & marrow, to be a hardning word, making the heart of flesh as hard & impenetrable, as the Adamant it self. So that a twofold design there is in the Gospel of Christ; one whereof is proper and natural, that is, to propound the way of life and salvation,

vation, the other is unnatural and accidental; which is to be the occaſion of greater blindneſſe & condemnation, by the wilfulneſſe & obſtinacy of unbelievers. Thus ye ſee, what the god of this world cannot effect by the baits and ſnares of abuſed proſperity; what the tempter cannot bring about by his ſecret inſtigations and illuſions; nor *Simon Magus* and his prophets by their ſpells and ſorceries; is at laſt completed by the profaning of an holy ordinance. This drives the nail to the head, and without a miracle of mercy, faſtens the obſtinate and obdurate hearer, to his eternal loſt condition.

And therefore ſome ſhort counſel and caution in a buſineſſe of ſo much concernment, cannot be thought ſuperfluous or unneceſſary. I do not know any admonition ſo often inſiſted on by our Saviour as this, *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear* But beſide this general, two cautions we have from him in particular concerning hearing. The one Mat. 4, 24. *Take heed what ye hear*; The other Luk 8. 18. *Take heed how ye hear*. Take heed *what*, for the matter; Take heed *how*, for the manner The firſt concerns my ſelf as well as you, and all thoſe of our function. For if ye muſt take heed what ye hear, we muſt alſo take heed

what we preach. But this being beside my Text, I shall not insist upon it, only I shall say thus much, That he that shall scatter (from the Pulpit) chaf and tares, and wild gourds, instead of wheat, may be suspected to receive his employment from the envious man, mentioned Mat. 13. 28. and he that shall build hay, and wood, and stubble, upon an Evangelical foundation, shall certainly expose his work unto the fire; though perhaps his person may be preserved.

1 Cor. 3. 12.

For the manner of your hearing, three cautions may be necessary, to re-inforce and explain our Saviours counsel; *Take heed how ye hear*. That is, Take heed

1. How ye are prepar'd before ye hear.
2. How ye are disposed when ye hear.
3. How ye are resolved and reformed when ye hear.

First, How prepared. The word of God is compared to seed; and mans heart to ground; now the husbandman will tell ye, there goes more to the reaping of an Harvest, then the bare sowing of the seed. There must be plowing, and dunging, and fallowing, and gathering out the stones, and much more, before the corn comes into the barn. And this the prophet Jeremy knew well, when he bespake the men of Judah and Jerusalem

salem from the Lord, saying; *Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns*; that is, as he explains himself in the next verse, *Circumcise your selves to the Lord, & take away the foreskin from off your heart*. Ier. 4. 3, 4 And upon this ground Iohn the Baptist was sent to *prepare the way of the Lord*, by preaching repentance and amendment of life, that so the people might be in a capacity to receive the benefit of Evangelical grace Elihu tells us, when he expostulated a businesse with Iobs three friends; he had a certain matter within him, which was *like wine* which hath no vent, but is ready to burst the new bottles that contain it; and our Saviour tels us for certain, that if men put new wine into old bottles, they shall quickly have an end of their wine, and the bottles too; for the wine will be spilled, and the bottles will be marred. There are certain seasonings of grace, which are very necessary to a Christian before the wine of Gods word be received into the soul. Two things especially the heart must be seasoned withal.

Mat. 3. 3.

Iob 32. 19.

Matth 9 17.

First, it must be seasoned with humility. We have an experiment in Philosophy, that from the bottom of a deep well, a man may see the stars at noon day, which he that walks abroad in the

Sunshine cannot do. The ground of best advantage from whence a Christian may look into divine mysteries, is from the valley of humility; namely, from an humble sense of his own wants, and an humble esteem of his best performances. *I dwell in the high and holy place*, saith God Almighty, & not only there, but *with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit; to revive the spirit of the humble, & the heart of the contrite ones*: Isa. 57. 15. The world is so ful of pride & prejudice; that what between Athenians (that digest no doctrine that favours not of novelty and strangeness) and Scribes and Pharisees, that reject all doctrine that makes against themselves: there is little hope of any reasonable proportion of fruit to be reaped from all our pains: what though the preacher be none of the greatest Rabbins; what if uneloquent, or indiscreet? yet 'tis Gods word, not his, when faithfully deliver'd, and where the cleer word of God does not prevail without eloquence, I shall very much suspect it will not prevail with it. I shall close this point with S. Paul's caveat, *Let no man deceive himself: if any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise. And if any man think that he knows any thing, he knows*

1 Cor. 3. 18.

1 Cor. 8. 2.

nothing

nothing yet as he ought to know. *Them that be meek, God will guide in their judgement; and such as are humble, them will he learn his way.* Psa. 28. 9.

Secondly, the heart must be seasoned by prayer. Gods word is spiritual, & we are carnal; & there is so great a distance between these two, that the carnal (or natural) man, *cannot discern the things of the spirit.* And we that are spiritual fishermen, *may toyl all night, and catch nothing* except Christ be with us in the ship. Faith (the great hinge whereon our salvation doth so much depend) is not a flower that grows in our own garden. We read of Lydia, that as Paul preached, *God opened her heart, that she attended to the things that were spoken of Paul.* God keeps the key of every mans heart, *he openeth and no man shutteth, & shutteth, & no man openeth.* But let me tell ye, there is no use of a Key, where the doe is fast bo'ted and barr'd within. I grant, Christ can enter into the soul, as he did into the Assembly of his disciples (*the dores being shut, where they were assembled for fear of the Iews*) Or he can force those iron dores of our hearts, at his own pleasure. But we have no assurance that he will do all he can do, for our humour and satisfaction. He could have commanded 1 Cor. 2. 14. Act. 16. 14. Rev. 3. 7. John 20. 19.

stones

stones into bread, or he could have done a miracle before Herod, and yet we know he would not. What may be expected from him, we may clearly understand from that Text, Rev. 3. 20. *Behold I stand at the dore and knock: If any man hear my voice, and open the dore, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.* Christ will never exclude himself, if we do not exclude him. And therefore, since the *way of man is not in himself*; and since *the preparations of the heart in man are cleerly* and entirely *from the Lord*, what we cannot attain unto by hearing, let us endeavour to gain by praying. That as a man lights a candle to find the snuffers, and then snuffs the candle, that it may burn cleater; that as my body first warms my clothes, and afterward my clothes keep warm my body; so let our prayers contribute an advantage to our hearing, and our hearing unto our praying. First, let us so pray, that we may hear; and afterwards so hear, as that we may pray, and live, and walk, and serve our God in truth and sincerity, with reverence and godly fear.

Ier. 10. 20.
Prov. 16. 1.

2. As we must be prepared before, so we must be rightly disposed when we hear. To a right disposition, there is something to be disposed of, before we come

come to hear; and S. Peter will tell ye what that is, namely the laying aside all malice, and all guil, and Hypocrisies, and envies, and evil speaking, that so as new born babes, ye may desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby. To these incongruities and inconsistences with religious Hearing; give me leave to remember ye of that irreverence and scandalous deportment which is notoriously visible in some men, even in the time of Hearing; who by their irreligious glances, their whispering comments, and their impudent affronts to *Christs Ambassadors*, even in the delivery of their sacred messages; do evidently declare, that they do not only secretly bolt the doors of their hearts against the preaching of Gods word; but that they set up a Bill of defiance against it, even in their countenances. I know I may be thought by some to be too severe (if not Pedantick) in this particular; but publick scandals, must have publick reprehensions. Nor do I presse this, out of any design to advance our esteem; but to prevent your ruin. My Zeal and indignation shall ever express it self both ways as well against those that give scandal out of the pulpit, as against those that take scandal and exception, where none is given. *Non est*

1 Pet. 2. 1. 2.

est ludendum cum sacris; Holy duties must be performed after an holy manner; God is very jealous of his honour, especially in his Name and Worship; And though his patience and long-suffering be highly provoked every day in other things; yet in this he is quickly stirred up to an expression of anger; as appears by the sad histories of *Uzzah*; the *Bethshemites*; *Nadab* & *Abihu*, the sons of Aaron; and the 250. princes that offered incense, Num. 16. God will be sanctified in all those that draw near unto him in his worship, and before all the people will he be glorified. Lev. 10. 3.

2. Sam. 6. 7. 1. Sam. 6. 19. Lev. 10. 2

Eccl. 5 1. And therefore, keep thy foot, when thou goest to the house of God (that is) look carefully to thy affections; see that thy heart be tender, and disposed aright to receive the impressions of Grace. Two properties there are of a tender heart, 1. it is always sensible, & moved at what is propounded out of the word of God. If any thing be propounded from the promises of grace and mercy; a Tender heart is presently enflamed, and warmed with the comfort of it; like the hearts of the two disciples our saviour overtook as they were going to *Emaus*. If any thing be propounded from the Threatnings of Gods Justice; there is pre-

Luc. 24. 32.

presently a sense of terror in the tender heart. This terror or trembling of heart, when it ariseth from an apprehension of Gods anger and discountenance; is of great esteem and acceptation in the sight of God. Heaven is my throne (saith God) and earth my footstool, but to this man will I look (or have respect) even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my words. And we read of good King *Iosiah*, that he received an answer of peace from Huldah the prophetesse upon this very ground. Because thine heart was tender, and thou didst humble thy self before God, when thou heardest his words against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, and humbledst thy self before me, and didst rend thy clothes, &c. Thou shall be gathered to thy grave in peace, neither shall thine eys see all the evil that I will bring upon this place, 2. Chron 34. 27. my heart standeth in aw of thy word, said he, that was a man after Gods own heart in aw of thy word; because the word of an omniscient God, that knoweth every secret cranny and crevise of my soul. In aw of thy word; because the word of an omnipotent God, who is able in a moment of time, to blast a thousand worlds with the breath of his displea-

Isa. 66. 1, 2.

Psal. 119. 101.

displeasure, In aw of thy word; because the word of a just, and a sin-revenging God; and in aw of thy word; because that word by which I must be judged at the last day.

Secondly, A tender heart, as it is a sensible; so it is always a pliable and yeilding heart: Like wax, it may be moulded into any form, will receive any impression. It is said of some Jewish converts, that upon the hearing of Peters sermon, they were pricked in their hearts, and they said to Peter, and to the Act. 2 37 rest of the Apostles; Men, and brethren, what shall we do? They were ready to do any thing the Apostles would advise them for the recovery and preservation of their own souls. And the first evidence we have of S. Pauls Conversion, was in his readinesse to be commanded. Act 22. 10. *Domine quid me vis facere? Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* we are then *Auditores idonei*, candid, and Christian-like auditors; when the word of God hath a kind of operation on our soules, when it works such a ready obedience in our hearts, that we throw away those arms by which we have rebelled against our Lord and maker; dismantle the strong holds which sin hath made in us; when it subdues every raigning and rebellious lust; and we are con-

contented to resigne up our selves, to be governed and regulated according to its wisdom and direction.

Lastly, we must be *reformed*, and *well resolved after Hearing*. First we must resolve to *keep the word*, as well as hear it; not receive it in at one ear, and suffer it to passe out at the other; *S. Iames* condemns such a one, for a very fruitlesse and unworthy Hearer; who comes to the word, as to a looking glasse, wherein he sees his ugly spots and deformities; but immediatly goeth away, and forgetteth what manner of person he was. No, the good seed in good ground is expounded to be those, who in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience. Thy word have I hid within my heart, that I might not sin against thee, saith David, Psal. 119. 11. Better no Hearing at all, then no retaining of what we hear; *Habendum* and *Tenendum*, *To have and to hold*, is the best title in the law; and to Hear, and to retain is the best possession of the Gospel. Iam. 1. 25. Luc 8. 15.

Secondly we must resolve to *Apply the word*; Gods word is a *Rule*, and his Church a spiritual building; There can be no Building or squaring without a Constant application of the Rule;

I like not those scandalous and particular applications, which strike at mens persons from the pulpit (which some unwise builders make the greatest part of their Sufficiency,) our Saviour would not speak in expresse terms, no, not to the Traytor *Iudas*; but cast the *Treason* among his *Disciples*, and left every man to enquire into himself, to find out the *Traytor*. Though we aym at no mans person from the pulpit, yet wee must level at every mans sins; and he that finds himself guilty of those sins we preach against; shall have my leave to conclude the preacher meant him. *Solomon* tells us, *The words of the wise, are as goads*, and *nayls fastned by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd.* Not only as *goads*, to prick men forward unto Christian duties; but as *nayls* also to fasten, and keep them where they should continue; now, though the driving of the nayl belongs to us, yet the clinching and fastning of the nayl belongs to you; I grant, that *preaching* without *Application*, is like a nayl without a point: but when we have sharpned and driven our nayl to the head; yet if it be not clinched on your parts, our preaching, and your Hearing, may be both in vain

Eccl. 12. 11.

Thirdly, we must resolve, as to keep and

and Apply the word; so in the last place, to obey it. Not to play fast and loose with it, as we please; to respect it when it serves our turns; and to crosse it, when it crosseth us; but to entertain it always as our governour and guide; and to embrace it as our sweet familiar friend; to make it a *lanthorn unto our feet, and a light unto our paths*; and to give it the sole and entire conduct of our selves and all our affairs. We say, the meat is well bestowed on those, that not only ease it with a good stomack, but such as thrive and encrease in health and strength by it. There were that heard the word with joy (in the parable of the sower) and yet their hearts were no better then stony ground and their fruit withered away assoon as it was sprung up. The best commendation of our pains at any time, must be taken from your practise: A Sermon is well heard, when there follows some abatement of sin; some improvement of Grace, some increase of spiritual strength and nourishment in the soul. Such as are truly planted in the house of the Lord; are said to flourish and spread like a Cedar in Lebanon; to bring forth still more fruit in their old age, and to be fat and well liking. In brief. To whomsoever much is given, of them

Psal. 119. 105.

Math. 13. 21.

Psal. 92. 13.

Luc. 12. 48.

them shall much be required. God expects our fruit should be proportionable to the seed sown, to his pains and Husbandry about us; and if it be not so, *I* tremble to think how unsatisfactory our account will be at the general Audit. *I* shall therefore conclude my counsel with that of *S. James*; *Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; let us lay apart all filthinesse, and superfluity of naughtinesse; and receive with meeknesse the ingrafted word, which is able to save our souls.* And *let us be Doers of the word, & not Hearers only, deceiving our own selves.*

And thus having shewed the *nature* & *degrees* of *spiritual Infatuation*, together with its *instrumental causes*; I am now to proceed to the *Signes* & *Symptomes* of this dangerous disease. *Physitians* say, a disease is more then half cured, when it is certainly known. And sure, of all other, there ought to be a particular care used in the discovery of this disease; because the persons infected with it, have the least sense of it.

Our Saviour hath long since foretold what shall be the signes of his second coming to Judgement; and they are set down for our warning and instruction, Mat. 24. and Luc. 21. And we find him reproving the *Pharisees* and the *Sadducees*,

duces, in that they could discover fair or foul weather from the face of the sky; but were not able to discern the signs of those Times. As there are *Signa Temporum*; certain *Signes*, belonging to certain *Times*: so there are *Signa Morborum*, certain *Signs*, belonging to certain *Diseases*. The *plague of Leprosie*, under the *Law*, was discerned by two *Signes*; Namely, *if the hayr within the plague were turned white; and the spot were deeper then the skin*. It was evidence enough for the *priest* to conclude it a *Leprosie*, & to pronounce the person so infected, to be unclean. The *plague of pestilence*, (wherewith our land hath been so often visited) hath certain spots, and swellings, which the common people call *Gods marks*, or *Tokens*; which when the *Searchers* perceive they presently shut up the house, & make a red crosse, or write, *Lord have mercy upon us* upon the dore. Those Roots that ly concealed in the earth all the *Winter*, are easily discerned in the Spring by such sprouts and suckers as arise from thence. There is a *Root of bitternesse* in the false heart of man, which though it ly close & concealed from the ey of the world; yet there are certain sprouts and sprigs, that at some season or other shew themselves, from whence a man may con-

Mat 16. 13.

Lev. 13. 3

conclude, that such a root there is not far from thence. I shall think it discovery enough on my part, to shew such evidence as appears above ground, leaving every man to look farther into himself, then is possible for me to do; since the power of discerning spirits is long since expired.

So that, as many *Lines* are drawn from the same Center, and many poysonous threds concur to make up the same *spiders webb*: so, this Bond of iniquity is a chain of divers links, a Cord of diver twists; and though the Divel appear not in any ugly, formidable shape; yet it will be no hard matter to discern the track of his cloven foot all along the path of *spiritual Infatuation*.

The first evidence then, which I shal produce as a Symptome of Infatuation, is, The strange adherence and belief which is very ordinarily given to notorious and apparent Lyes and Delusions. For as it is the policy of men (having to do with wild and refractory beast) to make it their first care to blind their eys, that by that means they may tame their hearts, and bring them to their beck and lure; So it is the policy of that grand Artist, the Divel first to cast a mist before the eys of those he intends to abuse with his jug-

ling

ng frauds; that so he may carry them
oodwinkd to their own destruction.
Was it not a strange Delusion in the
Israelites, after so long, and so remarka-
ble experience of Gods visible power
and protection over them to mistake a
Golden Calf, for the Great Iehovah? To Psal. 107.
change the glory of their invisible and 20.
incorruptible Creator; into the simili-
tude of an ox that eateth Grasse? To
Apostatize and fall away from the true
God; and to worship and fall down to
the stock of a tree? and yet this is the
best account we have of that infatuated
people in the prophet Isaiahs time,
who thus complaineth of them. They
have not known, nor understood, for he
hath shut their eys, that they cannot
see; and their hearts, that they cannot
understand. And none considereth in his Isa. 44.
heart, neither is there knowledge nor 18. 19.
understanding to say, I have burnt part 20.
of my God in the fire, I have baked
bread upon the coals thereof; and shall
I make the residue thereof an Abomi-
nation? shall I fall down to the stock
of a tree? He feedeth of ashes, a deceived
heart hath turned him aside, that he
cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there
not a lye in my right hand? And from
hence, the *Psalmist* makes the *Idol-*
maker, and the *Idol-worshipper*, and the
blockish-

blockish Idol it self, to be all of the same senselesness and stupidity, *they have* all *eyes alike, and see not; ears, and*
Ps. 115. 8. *hear not; feet, and walk not; They that make Idols, are like unto them; and so are all such as put their trust in them.*

Had not this charm of *Infatuation*, a strange power upon the minds of the English Nation, when that notorious cheat of *King* and *Parliament* began to commence and walk the world with such general reception and entertainment? and did not the jugglers of this age believe as much? when men did not blush to preach, and print; That the opposing the Kings power, was the justest way of defending it; That the fyring of Canon at his Royal person, was to be understood for his defence and preservation; that an Army was necessary to bring him to his Parliament, when he was there before (as was pretended) in his best capacity: and that an Army was as necessary to keep him from his Parliament; when he would have been there personally, for the just satisfaction of his people? And now, that men have seen how well his power and his person hath been defended; now, that they have seen the ruine of Religion and good Laws in the murther of their Soveraign, and the Liberty of the subjects re-

reſolved into the arbytrarie pleaſure of the Souldier; is not the deluſion as ſtrong at this day as ever? Is not our Infatuation (together with our miſeries) encreaſed almoſt into a miracle? Is there any man almoſt, that for fear of himſelf, dares thus expoſtulate with himſelf, what have I been doing now theſe 7. or 8. yeers? what contributions have I given to the preſent miſeries and confuſion of my Nation? Gods Truth is ſtill the ſame; but is not my underſtanding ſtrangely changed from what it was; *Is there not a ly in my right hand?* To ſay there are none in this hopeful way of recovery, were *durus ſermo*, an hard ſaying, which I dare not own: But yet let me tell ye, the paucity of thoſe who own their errors as they ſhould be owned, that is, with repentance and ſatiſfaction, is enough to proclaim to all the world; that the blindneſſe o' theſe times, is not much unlike to that of Sodom; all, old and young, all from every quarter almoſt involved; and for ought I know, may be as nigh deſtruction too, though not by a judgement ſent immediately from heaven. Gen. 18. 4

And now I am ſpeaking of Infatuation; it may fall under a queſtion; whether the moſt violent and virulent part of the Engliſh Rebels, do at this day

discern the error of their way, or not. I know much may be said on the affirmative, and most men believe, that however they pretend Gods cause, and the like, yet they have many a secret check within themselves for what they do. But I am clearly for the Negative, and I think I have Scripture grounds for my opinion. I shall easily grant, there was a time when they did see their error; though now I believe they do not. For men are no longer masters of their own eyes, when once the hand of God hath closed them; such as rebel against the light of Gods word (knowing it to be so) it is most just with God to obstruct the way of his truth, and to close up their senses for ever, lest they should *see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and be convert, &c.*

And that this is not a private guesse of my own, vouched with as little warrant, as charity; you shall hear S. Paul speak to it. *Now the spirit speaketh expresly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrine of divels; speaking lies in hypocrisie, having their Consciences seared with an hot iron.* Where 'tis easie to observe the method and progresse of Gods justice upon such as do see, and will not.

1 Tim 4. 1, 2.

First

First, they shall depart from the faith which they have once professed. Secondly, they shall give heed to seducing spirits, and *doctrines of divels*. Thirdly they shall *speak lyes in hypocrisie*, speak for truth what they know to be lyes, there's the wilfulness of their sin; and then follows (as a just reward) their *consciences shall be seared*, and there's the irrecoverableness of the judgement. And from the strength of this delusion it comes to passe, that men shall think they do God good service, when they shall murther his own Ambassadours, according to our Saviours own prediction. So that as we read (in the hystory of Henry 7. of that famous impostor *Perkin Warbeck*, that he cosened the world so long by personating a King, that (from his accustomed Majestick garb and deportment) he began at length to believe himself to be so indeed; till his high thoughts of himself, were confuted by the base service of the Kings kitchin: And as it fares with some melancholy constitutions, who by dwelling over long upon their own thoughts and Phantasmes, have believed themselves to be beasts, and behaved themselves accordingly; so the inuring of a mans self to speak lies meerly in hypocrisie, to promote impo-

Joh. 16, 2.

sture; is the high way (at long running) to believe in earnest that to be a truth, which at first was known to be but a lie. For it is not enough that the intellect be acquainted with Divine Truth; but that the heart be warmed also with love of that truth; the want of which, is the cause of the grossest error and deception. This is cleared also by an expres's assertion of the same Apostle, *Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe lie, that they all might be damned, who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.* So that if these men of whom I speak, have adventured upon so bold a sin, as to *hold the truth of God in unrighteousness*; that is, by their own pharisaical malice and perverseness, have manacled and chained up Gods truth from having any dominion over themselves or actions; if their eys have been fixed more upon the spoyl and advantage that might be gain'd by a war, then upon any true Evangelical grounds in commencing a war; if their hearts have been pre-resolved to expunge or abuse any Text of Scripture that might stand in their way; and to imprison any prophet that shall seasonably admonish them

2 Thes. 2. 10, 11, 12.

them of the error of it(al which I ſpeak by way of ſuppoſitiō, leaving the world to determine of the truth of my ſuggeſtions) I ſay, it is no wonder at all, if theſe men (having forfeited the benefit of al the fair warnings & convincements they have had, by their wilfulneſſe and obſtinacy) at this time of day, miſtake *darkneſs* for *light*, *Belial* for *Chriſt*, and their own whimſeys & deluſions, for the ſecret inſpiration of the holy Ghoſt.

But leaving theſe men (with the Sodomites) to grope at noon day, and to reflect a little on our ſelves in this particular. I could wiſh the ſtrong deluſions I ſpeak of, dwelt only on the other ſide the ſalt water; I do not intend to meddle with our Councels, and publike Tranſactions (which by many men are thought to ſavour ſomthing of infatuation) I ſhall ever pray for Gods bleſſing upon them, but otherwiſe underſtand them to be both without & above the ſphere of my profeſſion. But let us reflect upon our ſelves, as we are chriſtians, and upon our converſations, as they are expoſed to every eye. Is not the world ſtrangely cheated and abuſed by falſe ghoſts, when *light* is ſo ordinarily put for *darkneſs*, and *darkneſs for light*? *Good for evil, and evil for good*? When that which is highly eſteemed

among *men*, is *an abomination in the sight of God*; and that which is most vile & abominable in the sight of God, is most acceptable & plausible in the esteem of men; To give you an instance or two.

The murther of *Abel* by *Cain* his brother, was an act so soul and horrid, that God thought fit to punish it immediately, with no less then an hell of horror and trembling. And to prevent the imitation & infection of so soul a crime, a law was presently enacted, Gen. 9 6. *Who so sheddeth mans blood by man shall his blood be shed*, and the reason is there added, *for in the image of God made he man*. The shedding of innocent blood in Manasses, was a sin that the Scripture 2 King. 24. 4. declares God would not pardon. And yet the Divel hath put so fair a gloss upon this soul sin; that the world pleads a necessity that this scarlet sin be worn with the Buff coat; and that man that is not prersolved to chalenge the field, & there attempt the butchering of his Christian brother, and perhaps, his late friend (and in that stab at God himself in his own image) upon the least drunken or passionate provocation, is not thought fit to associate with any gent'e man. Thus by vertue of a wild notion honour (which is no more honour then the mire in the streets is gold) me

are sent away many times to Gods Tribunal of Justice, with their blood about their ears, and all their murtherous intendments in their hearts, without the allowance of one hours time to make up their accounts with God Thus are men hurried away to their eternal ruine, by the power of a strong delusion, without ever considering or expostulating with themselves. Have not I put my self out of the protection of my heavenly father? have not I put my self into the possession of the divel? Am *I* not going about a most desperate and horrid employment? am *I* able to pray, or believe, or perform any act of Christian duty, as becoms a Christian? *Is there not a ly in my right hand?* So that according to this wild principle of honour, That man must lie under the brand of a Coward, that will not be damned for company; or at least, that will not run a desparate hazard to dare his own damnation.

Again, The Treason of Judas was so desperate and abominable, that the traitor himself was thought fit to be his own Executioner; and without troubling either Judge or Jury, or witness in his condemnation. *Judas* conveys him self to his own place, Act. 1. 25. and yet this Traytor Divel is now grown so

plausible both in the Court, and in the Camp, that a man is thought a weak brain'd fool, that hath not so much of *Judas* in him, as to betray his Lord and Master. *Quid dabitis, & ego tradam?* what will ye give me, and I will betray a Fort, a Garison, an Army into your hands? may well be the motto of this false age, for its foul Treasons and Conspiracies. Nay so strong is the delusion grown, that we begin to disclaim the very principles of *Religion*, *Justice*, and *Honour*; and think those prophets little lesse then mad men, that would hold us to those safe, easie, and unerring rules; as if we were possessed with that profane and desperate spirit of *Jehoram* the son of *Ahab*, who (in the extremity of siege & famine) rejected the Lord, and the counsel of his *prophet*, saying, *behold this evil is of the Lord, what should I wait for the Lord any longer?* 2 Kin. 6.

To come yet closer unto our selves, Have we not reason to suspect we are under the power of an infatuation, or delusion, when those sins which at first we committed not without great trembling and horror, are now by custome and acquaintance, grown so plausible and familiar, that we can hug them in our bosoms, and ly down upon our pillows, without the least disturbance arising

sing from the thought of them? is there not an apparent witchcraft in the pleasures of sin, when our very judgements become changed and perverted, by the vileness and looseness of our affections? and notwithstanding all the curses and threatnings of Gods word, denounced against our beloved sins, yet we can *bless our selves* in our own apprehensions, *and say, we shall have peace, though we walk on in the imaginations* of our own deluded spirits? is it not a strange vanity of mind, to believe that God will un-God himself, and lay aside that glorious attribute of his *Justice* (which is essential to his nature) to indulge and comply with us in our sinful enormities? I will not rashly or severely conclude of any mans condition, I shall rather entreat you all to be your own private confessors, and ask your selves, whether these, and such like perswasions are not lodged in your bosoms. What? may I not be Christian enough with some few secret sins reserved? or, is there not time enough hereafter to lay them aside, when *the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eys, and the pride of life* have had their seasonable satisfactions; must *I* account with God for those oaths that slip from me unawares, as insensibly as my breath passeth from me? Deut. 29. 19.

or for that *deliberate Perjurie*, without which I cannot save my *Estate*, my *Wife*, and *children* from extreme misery? shall I deprive my self of the benefit of my Saviours death; for living a little, or a little longer to my self? To my proud, envious, and ambitious self; To my vain, sensual, and virious self? *I* am not so wicked, and debauched, as many others; and there are many that passe for eminent, and wise men, that are as wicked as my self. These I take, to be the pleasing dreams, and delusions of our Corrupt and seduced hearts.

In answer where-unto, you must know, that the Generality of iniquity, doth not lessen, or abate the guilt of it. Leprosie, is not lesse Leprosie, because it hath overspred the whole body, nor is the Pestilence of lesse danger, and infection; because every house in the street is infected with it. These thoughts, if they were searched to the bottom (I believe,) would be found to arise from no lesse then secret Atheisme. And if men would speak out; their language would differ little from him that said, *Tush, God hath forgotten mine iniquity, he hideth away, his face, and will never see it.* For let men pretend never so much to *faith*, & a *good conscience*; whilst their works are *opera tenebrarum*, the works of darkness,

Psal. 10. 11.

I

I cannot believe they do seriously desire to be acquainted with the light; and whilst mens conversations are so *Atheistical & Divellish*, I cannot think they believe either the *Justice of God, or the truth of his word, or the vileness of their sins, or the immortality of their souls.* They are certainly under the power of some strong delusion. And this I take to be one symptom of infatuation; for the mind to be bewitched with blindness & error. *And if the light that is in us, is darkness, oh how great is that darkness?* Mat. 6. 23.

A second symptom of *Infatuation*, I take to be a bold and daring kind of *impudence* in sinning, when men care neither what they do, nor before whom when there is not only a *want of sight* in the *understanding* to look upon sin in its ugly nature and complexion, a *want of sorrow* in the *heart*, to grieve for it; but a *want of shame* in the face, to blush for it. *I* joyn both these together, because an *unrelenting heart*, and *a brazen brow*, *impudence* and *impenitence* are birds of the same hatch and feather. I find both charg'd upon the house of Israel, by the Prophet Ezekiel, *All the house of Israel are impudent and hard-hearted.* Ezek. 3. 3. 7.

We read Num. 5 of a water of a very strange, but certain operation. In those times it was in the power of the jealous

husband, to bring his wife to a certain tryal, whether she had abused his bed, & transgressed the covenant of her God by *adultery*, or not. The manner thus, he summoned his wife before the *Priest*, & there compelled her to drink of a *bitter water*, which if she were guiltless, produced no ill effect at all, but was the occasion of fruitfulnes (which was ever thought a great honour to that Sex) but if guilty of that foul sin of *Adultery*, then it would certainly make her thigh to rot, and her belly to swell, and that woman became a proverb, and a curse unto her people.

It was the same water, how came it then to have such a different operation? certainly, it was not from the water, but from the guilt and delinquency of the woman; wherein I do not so much admire the foulness of her sin, as the boldness of her obstinacy; who knowing the dreadful curse that would certainly follow that bitter potion, rather then confess her guilt, would stand out in a publike and professed defiance of Gods justice. It is no otherwise with bold and refractory sinners; who (though they hear the curses of God denounced against their dearest sins) do yet stand out in an open defiance of their Lord and Maker, making every sermon they hear

a

a witnesse unto their rebellion, and a seal unto their Condemnation. So that however men may carry their countenances in the Sanctuary of God, with such a smooth confidence; as if they were no way concerned in those accursed sins we preach against; yet God knows, and we know, and we tremble to think, what secret operation our despised messages have upon their bold and refractory spirits. There were many foul abominations committed in Israel in the time of the Prophet Jeremy; and yet behold with what impudence they carried themselves in all their wickedness. *Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed neither could they blush*; Jer. 6. 15. But instead of blushing, see how they behave themselves in the next chapter; They stole, they murthered, they Committed Adultery, they sware falsly, they burned incense unto Baal, they walked after other Gods, whom they knew not, and yet (notwithstanding all this) they came, and stood before God, in his house which was called by his name; & and said too, that they were delivered to do all these abominations. But see the doom of his infatuated people; they had sinned themselves so far out of Gods favour, that the Prophet is inhibited Jer. 7. 9. 10.

Ier.7.15. ted so much as to pray for them. Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up a cry, nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me, for I will not hear thee.

It was a foul aggravation of *Judas Iscariots* treason, in that he had the impudence to come before his master and kisse him, when he meant to betray him,

Luc.22. 48. What Judas? betrayest thou the son of man with a kisse? Is it not wickednesse enough, that from a disciple thou provest a Traytor; a Traytor to me thy master; Thy master whom thou knowest to be innocent; a master, whom thou knowest not to be ignorant of this base conspiracy; but must all this wickednesse be disguised *amoris pignore*? must the seal of Love be made the signal of thy Treason? betrayest thou the son of man with a kisse? Was it not wickednesse enough in subjects to betray and falsify the Trust reposed in them, when they were called to the great Council of England, and from Councellors, to grow up to be controulers; To persecute with Tongues, and penns, and Armies, their Royal Lord and master: To strip him of his estate, and the nearest comforts of his life; To imprison, arraign, condemn, and execute the best of mortal Monarches, before his own Royal

Royal pallace? But muſt all this be done under a pretence of Iuſtice, and Law, and the general good of the Kingdom? Certainly, This was ſuch a tranſcendent piece of impudence, as fills the world with amazement; and (which I fear) will never find the way to repentance. And for this, and the like bold vilanies and inſolencies; I know not whether I ſhall call the preſent; The iron-hearted or the Brazen-foreheaded Generation: for certainly; all the bold vilanies which have been acted ſince the world began, (even among the moſt barbarous and ſavage kind of peop'e) may be thought but *petty-Lareenyes*, compared with what this Age hath produced within our own Nation. And now, with what confidence do theſe men triumph in the chains and ſnares, they have made for their own unwary ſouls? How do they brave it upon thoſe ſlippery pinacles of advantage, which the madneſſe of the people, the caſua'ties of war, and their own baſe bribery and Corruption have ſet them? with what Impudence do they addreſſe themſelves to forrain *Princes*, and *States*? how do they threaten if they are not aſſiſted? as if all the world were obliged to ſtrike ſayl to their preſent power; or, as if they were maſters of the whole world in their own imaginations.

In

In 1 King. 20. we have a remarkable story of *Benhadad King of Syria*; who (being lifted up with the thoughts of his own power, and *Ahabs* weakness.) sends a peremptory message to the *King of Israel*, saying; *Thy silver, and thy gold is mine; thy wives also, and thy children, even the goodliest, are mine.* Vers. 3. And understanding by his servants that Vers. 6. *Ahab* was content to pay him this Homage; He sends a second message, saying; I will send my servants unto thee to morrow about this time; and they shall search thine house, and the houses of thy servants; and it shall be, that whatsoever is pleasant in thine eys, they shal put it in their hand, and take it away. (That is, in short) they must be admitted, to come into the City, and plunder what they pleased to lay their hands on. *Benhadad* being refused in Vers. 10. this unreasonable demand, breaks out into a rage, saying, The Gods do so unto me, and more also, if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls, for all the Vers. 11. people that follow me. Well (saith *Ahab*) let not him that girdeth on his harnesse, boast himself as he that putteth it off. The matter comes to be disputed by the sword, where in two battels the King of Syria is worsted, and reduced to so low a condition; that he sends

ſends his ſervants unto Ahab, with ſackcloth upon their loyns, and ropes about their necks, to beg for life. I have produced this ſtory, only for the reflection it hath upon the Boldneſſe of theſe Times; in impoſing upon *Kings* according to their preſent extremities; And although I do not expect that any ſucceſſe whatſoever ſhall ever bring the Kings enemies to him upon their knees, with ropes about their necks; and though I dare not (as a Prophet) foretel the iſſues of war: Yet I look upon the Boldneſſe, and Tyranny of thoſe at Weſtminſter, as more then probable preparatives to the fall of their power; The wings by which they have flown to this height, I take to be unnatural, like thoſe of Icarus; Their motion ſo violent and unſteddy, that their fall, when ere it comes (I believe) will be as ſudden, as irrecoverable. Verſ. 32.

And I am the rather induced to believe the preſent power and greatneſſe of theſe men not to be long lived; becauſe of their great Boldneſſe in profaning Gods holy ordinances; beginning at Gods houſe every day with preaching and Praying, that ſo they may with the better colour and diſguiſe, ſtate and conclude their *Theſts*, and *Murthers*, & *perjuries* throughout the Kingdom:

Nay

Nay, they do not stick to say too, in expresse terms, that they are delivered and prospered to do all their abominations. Certainly, if our sins do not perpetually obstruct the way of Gods Iustice, he is highly concerned in honour, to put a hook in the nostrils, and a bridle in the mouth of these impudent sinners; that all the world may know, that the rage and fierceness of man, shall turn to his own praise? That the Hope of the Hypocrite shall passe away like a puff of breath; and all his fine spun confidences, shall be but like a spiders web before the besom of destruction. And truly I know not in what language to expresse this daring wickedness, unlesse I shall call it *professed Atheisme*; nor where to find a parallel unto this *Atheisme*, unlesse it be Psal. 50. 21. There God expostulates with some, who concluded from his patience and long suffering, that he was even as wicked as themselves; or themselves as just and upright as himself, *These things hast thou done* (saith God) *and I kept silence*; and *thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thy self*; but *I will reproove thee, and set in order before thine eys the things that thou hast done. Consider this all ye that forget God: lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deli-*

Psal. 76. 10.
Job 11. 20.
Iob 8. 14.

deliver you; Conſider this, all ye that (under gaudy pretenſes) *flatter your ſelves in your own wickedneſſe, until your abominable ſin be found out*; Conſider whether you are brought (at long running) even to down-right Atheiſme; not only to deny, or diſbelieve the *Juſtice* of God; but his Purity and holineſſe; and to conclude him to be like one of the Heathen Gods, or (which is worſe) to be as unclean and filthy as your ſelves Nor is it any great wonder, that men (having acted all their bold wickedneſſe againſt *Gods Ancy ted.*) if at laſt they appear in Blaſphemy & defiance of God himſelf And this I take to be another Symptom of *Infatuation*, when the ſoul hath ſinned it ſelf out of the *ſhame* and *bluſhes* which belongs to notorious ſins.

A Third ſymptom of Infatuation is, when the mind of man is unconſe'lable; When a man is wilfully and incorrigibly reſolved to walk contrary unto God; not only when a man is not reformed; but when he hates to be reformed. It is ſaid of Ahab, that he ſold himſelf to work wickedneſſe in the ſight of the Lord. That is, his heart was ſo ſet upon it, that he takes *Elijah* for his enemy, for no other reaſon, but becauſe he would reprove him for his wickedneſſe; Lev. 26. 23. Pſal. 50. 17. 1 King. 21. 20.

neſſe; and hates *Micajah*, for no other reaſon, but becauſe he knew he would ſpeak Truth. This incorrigibleneſſe of mind was ſo hainous and intolerable under the Law of *Moſes*, that it was puniſhed with death; as appears Deut. 21. 18. If a man have a ſtubborn and rebellious ſon, which will not obey the voice of his Father, and Mother; and when they have chaſtned him, will not hearken unto them; then ſhall his Father and Mother lay hold on him, and bring him unto the Elders of his City, and unto the gate of his place; and they ſhall ſay unto the Elders of his City, this our ſon is ſtubborn, and rebellious; he will not obey our voice: he is a glutton, and a drunkard. Then all the men of the City ſhall ſtone him with ſtones, that he dy, &c He was not ſtoned for his Gluttony and drunkenneſſe (which might be thought but petty venial ſins, compared with the licentiouſneſſe of theſe times) but for his incorrigibleneſſe, in that he would not be reclaimed. And indeed, It is not always the greatneſſe of the ſin, but the wilfulneſſe of the ſinner that aggravates the crime, and expoſeth a man to the ſevere wrath of God. We read of one that was ſtoned to death by Gods own immediate determination, only for *gathering*

ring a few ſticks on the Sabbath day. Num. 15. What might be the reaſon of ſo much 32. ſeverity to vard ſo ſlight a tranſgreſſion? It was, becauſe God had preciſely commanded, that *no man ſhould go out of his* Exod. 16. *place on the ſeventh day.* And therefore 29. whether the tranſgreſſion were great or ſmall; the law of thoſe times was. That *the ſoul that did ought preſumptuouſly, whether he were born in the land, or a ſtranger; the ſame reproched the Lord: and that ſoul was to be cut off from his people,* as appears, Num. 15. 30.

This I take to be the only true *Evangelical* ground of *Excommunication* and *Cenſure*; as appears by thoſe inſtructions, given by our *Saviour* Mat. 18. *If thy brother ſhall make a treſpaſſe,* go Mat. 18. *and tell him his fault between thee* and 15. 16. 17 *him alone; If he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more; and if he ſhall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church,* but *if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an Heathen,* &c. And then follows, *verily I ſay unto you; Whatſoever ye ſhall bind on earth, ſhall be bound in heaven,* &c. The thunder of the *Churches cenſures*, was not wont to be diſcharged at every diſagreement in doctrine, every diſtinement in matters (perhaps) meerly indifferent (I fear our modern reformers have

have learned of the *Jesuite*, to reduce all matters *ad Spiritualia*, out of particular aym and satisfactions; making their censures as cheap as contemptible, and as scandalous as themselves.) That *fulmen Ecclesiæ* was wont to be used only in cases of extreme necessity, and with great deliberation and candour; as when the matter was fundamental to the faith; or when the person scandalous by his contumacy, and all other means had been used to reclaime him; In such cases, *Tutius est ut pereat unus, quam unitas*; better a Hand or a Leg be cut off, rather then the whole body should be endangered by a *Gangrene*.

It is said of *S. Stephens* murtherers, Act. 7. 57 That they stopped their ears, and ran upon him all at once, and cast him out of the City, and stoned him. When men stop their ears against the voice of their reprovers, it is no wonder if they involve themselves in desperate & horrid consequences. It was a custome among the *Heathens*, and afterwards (in imitation of them) among the *Israelites*; 1 King. 23. 10. when they sacrificed their children unto *Moloch*, to make use of drums, & such like instruments, to deaf the ears, and dull the senses of the spectators, lest they should be moved to compassionate the

the pitiful Cries of the poor sacrificed children. From whence the valley of *Hinnom* is thought by some to receive the name of *Tophet*; from *Toph*, which signifies a *Drum*. And we read Mat. 8. 29. Of two *Demoniacks*, that were exceedingly tormented at our Saviours presence, and therefore they cry out, *Quid nos tecum? what have wee to do with thee, thou Iesus, son of the living God? art thou come to torment us before our time?* of the same hellish and infernal constitution, is the stubborn and incorrigible spirit; He is enraged and disquieted at the thought of any thing that may tend to his conversion; and therefore he stops his ears against all pious and sober Councels; He will not go to church, for fear of being awakened out of his beloved sleep; will not hear such a man preach, for fear of being pricked in conscience, which will put him to more pain then he is willing to endure; He is resolved upon his course, from which hee will not be diverted by any seasonable warnings, no, though one should be sent unto him from the dead, on purpose to reclaim him.

And as is the *Sin*, so is the *punishment*; The sin wilful, and the punishment inevitable. For when men are *resolved* that nothing shall divert them in their sin;

sin; God is resolved, that nothing shall divert their Judgement. When men stop their ears from Hearing, God will not only stop the mouthes of his Prophets from reproving; but his own gracious ears from Hearing. They stop their ears at his calls, and he will stop his ears at their Cries, in the day of their Extremity. And for this we have a very cleer Text, Prov. 1. 24. Because I have called, and ye refused, *I* have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my Counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as a desolation, and your destruction as whirl-wind, when distresse and anguish cometh upon you; then shall they call upon me, but *I* will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me. And certainly it is a sad condition to perish, and to have none to pity us. For what pity can we expect from men or Angels; when the father of mercies, and the God of all consolation will laugh at our destruction? He that at one time wept over Jerusalem, because shee would not repent, and foresee the day of her visitation; was at another time pleased with the destruction of that incorrigible

Luc. 19. 41.

City

City, when there was no way left for repentance.

So that this desperate wilfulnesse of mind, as it is the natural effect and consequent of infatuation; so it is the certain forerunner of ruine and destruction. For the proof of this, I shall only produce two instances. The one is in the sons of Ely, of whom it is said, *They harkned not unto the voice of their father, because the Lord would slay them.* The other is in *Amaziah* king of *Judah*, who (having gained a victory over the Edomites, & taken their gods to be his gods) the Lord sent a prophet to reprove him for it; who answered the propher, saying, *Art thou made of the Kings Counsel, forbear; why shouldest thou be smitten? Then the prophet forbare, and said, I know that God hath determined to destroy thee, because thou hast done this, and hast not harkned unto my counsel.* And so it fell out within a short time after

And therefore, Go to now, all ye that despise and reject the seasonable warnings of your prophets. That dare the *day of your visitation*, and say (with those in the prophet *Isaiah*) *Let him make speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it; and let the counsel of the holy one of Israel draw nigh, that we may know it.* Ye, that walk after your own lusts; and yet are of the number of those scoffers S. Peter speaks of, saying, *where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue*

as they were from the beginning of the creation. Ye, that glory in your shame, and boast of your wickedness, and say, *our Tongues are our own, we are they that ought to speak*; we will not subject our Consciences to any yoke. Look to it, and be assured, that there is *evil before you*, though you discern it not; we can see (from the sacred oracles) that sour star that governs, and that sad fate that attends you, without calculating your Nativities. And (without the help of a prognostication) discern at a distance that black cloud of judgement which is gathering over you, wherein the thunder and lightning of the fierce wrath of God is reserved for you. And the ground of this confident assertion, we derive from that of Solomon, Pro. 29. 1. *He that being often reproved, hardneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.*

Fourthly, This incurable evil of Incorrigibleness, is ever attended with another evil as desperate and pernicious to the soul. And that is senslessness and security, especially in the time of the greatest danger. And herein appears the strength and witchcraft of Infatuation, in that men are never so jolly and unapprehensive of danger, as when they are dancing upon the very brink of the bottomless pit, & (with Jonas, though a rebel and a fugitive from his Lord and maker) their sleep is then soundest upon the pillow of security, when they are in the most eminent danger to be cast away.

away, Of such as these (doubtless) doth the Prophet Isaiah complain *In that day, did the Lord God of hosts call to weeping, & to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth; and behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, & drinking wine; Let us eat and drink for to morrow we shall dy. And it was revealed in mine ears, by the Lord of hosts, surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till you dy.* That is, it shall never be purged from you, but you shall dy in it.

And certainly, this cannot but be taken as an high provocation and affront to Gods justice, when not only his threatnings, but his immediate extensions are scorn'd and despised. Shall the Lyon roar, and shall not the beasts of the forrest tremble? Shall the most high God thunder out of heaven, and not sinful guilty man be afraid? Will Zimri and Cozbi be shameless, at their uncleaness, just at the same time the fierce anger of the Lord breaks out against Israel, when the Congregation is weeping before the dore of the Tabernacle? Certainly, this is that madness of heart Solomon speaks of, when men have no knowledge or sense of the time of their visitation, but, *as the Fishes that are taken in an evil net and as the birds are caught in the snare, so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them.*

And therefore our Saviour foreseeing that his Disciples would be found sleeping even in

that very hour when he was to be betrayed, gives them a caution, which can never be unseasonable to any Christian. *Take heed to your selves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfetting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.* For, *as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.* But wherefore as a snare? But because it shall surprize men when they are unprepared, and unprovided of any thing to resist the evil of that day; like an armed man, that rushe h suddenly upon a man that hath nothing in his hand to defend himself. Thus came the Deluge upon the old world, as a snare; not but that they had an hundred and twenty yeers warning; in all which time, the Patriarck Noah was their Chaplain, *a preacher of righteousness unto them*; but it came as a snare, because they were *spirits shut up in prison* (as S. Peter cals them) that is, captived and ensnared in their own blindness and security. Would you know the time when the people of Laish were destroyed? It was then, when *they dwelt carelesse, after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet, and secure; when there was no Magistrate in the land, that might put them to shame in any thing.* Would you know the time when the Philistins received their greatest blow from the hand of Sampson? It was then, when they had eaten and drunken to the full, *when their hearts were merry, then they called for*

for Sampſon to make them ſport in the houſe of Dagon their God; Then a ſudden deſtruction came upon them unawares, and their ſport and jollitie ended in their common ruine, would you know the Time, when the Iſraelites, were deſtroyed by the ſevere hand of God? It was juſt then, when the *Quailes were between their teeth; when they were not eſtranged from their luſt; Then the wrath of God came upon them, and ſlew the fatteſt of them, and ſmote down the choſen men that were in Iſrael.* Would you know the Time, when Ieruſalem was threatned to be ſearched as with candles and viſited? The Prophet Zephany will reſolve you; 't was, when the inhabitants thereof were ſetled on their Lees, when they ſaid in their hearts, The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil.

So that, if you ſhall demand of me when the Time, or when the Day of our Saviours ſecond coming to judgement ſhall be: I dare not adventure to reſolve you, as ſome have done, from the meer Dictate of their own phrenſies, and deluſions; ſince that day and hour knoweth no man, no not the Angels which are in heaven: But I ſhall tell you when in the general; it ſhall be in the night, if not in the natural night of darkneſſe and obſcurity; yet in the black night of perſecution and trouble; and it ſhall be in that hour of night, in which the thief uſeth to come, that is in the dead time of the night, when men are

fast a sleep in sin and security. It shall be in an age when Antichrist shall be revealed. When the world shall be haunted with many false Christs, and seducing spirits. When the Gospel shall be preached to all the world, & yet so little credit shall be given unto it, that faith shall scarce be found upon the earth. It shall be in an Age, when men shall be as sensual & sinful, and as secure in those sins, as they were in Noahs time; and for this I have expresse warrant from our Saviour. But *as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be; for as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating, and drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entred into the Ark; and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.* And if the sensual and secure oppressor would know the particular daily resolve him; namely, at that very time when he think[s] time of his visitation, I can punctually then neares[t], wh[en] least of it; his evil day is 'And for this to[o] he puts it fardest from him. forecited chapter; I have warrant out of the *shall say in his hear[t] But, and if that evil servant ing, and shall begin t[o] my Lord delayeth his coming, and to eat, and drink[e] smite his fellow servants, of that servant sha[ll] with the drunken; the lord looketh not for him, [and] come in a day when he ware of, and shall cut [him] in an hour he is not a- him his portion with th[e] asunder, and appoint Hypocrites,* &c. So

that

that however the Tabernacles of robbers may prosper for a time, and they that hate God may seem secure, yet weigh their condition truly in the ballance of the Sanctuary, and you shall cleerly understand, that their prosperity is their greatest curse; and their security their greatest Judgement.

To all these, I shall add but one more symptome of the infatuated spirit; and that is, A resolution to maintain and justifie the errors and iniquities of his evil doings. And truly, as perseverance in the duties of Christian Religion, is that golden clasp that unites grace with glory; so perseverance in rebellion and wickedness, is the very portal of Hell, the neareſt Border I can name to the bottomlesse pit. There is a time and state in sin, when the dregs of sin are frozen and congealed; when sin is out of measure sinful, and the sinner beyond measure desperate & stupid Thus when *Catiline* had fired the City of Rome with his horrid plots and conspiracies, he had nothing else to say for himself, but this, *Incendium meum, ruina extinguam*, I will quench the fire I have kindled, with a final ruine; or (with the help of a Poet) *The ills that I have done cannot be safe, but by attempting greater*, I will add worse unto evil, thirst unto drunkenesse, and leave the succesſe of my ungracious actions, to the extremest adventures.

And certainly, had the Catilines and Machiavels of our age and Nation, steer'd in their

black designs by any other principle, but that of a necessity of defending themselves, and maintaining their own actions (how horrid and unconscionable soever) we might have seen their repentance, & our peace and agreement long ere this day; But the witchcraft of Rebellion is, that it dares not look backward, and knows not how to retreat from what it hath once dared to attempt. He that once draws his sword in a rebellion, is obliged (by an Infernal principle) to throw away the scabbard; for, where the doctrine of repentance is admitted, the rules of policy and self preservation are presently plucked up by the roots. As I have not so little charity, as to believe these men at first intended the third part of the wickedness which they have acted, by falling from one wickedness to another, So I have not so much charity, as to believe they will be ever reclaimed into the duty of good subjects, but by the hand of power. And this belief of mine, takes its rise from the bold defence they make, in maintaining themselves in their abominable vilanies, and the bold defiance they bid the whole world to bring them unto condigne punishment. Thus have they cast behind their backs, the wholsom rules of Religion and Conscience, steering desperately by that divellish principle, *Per scelera ad scelus tutum iter*. Making one wickedness, the rise and advantage, and battery unto another, and their unbleſſed prosperity, an affront and

defiance

defiance to the Divine vengeance; and will rather put themselves, and the conduct of their affairs, into the hands of the Divel, then kneel either to God or the King for mercy.

A man would think those Romanists in a very sad condition, who having embarqued themselves in some notorious Treason or conspiracy (perhaps against the See of Rome, as for other Treason, here may be a Dispensation,) insomuch that they durst not trust their holy father with their confession; for if they did confesse, they were in danger to be hanged; and if they confessed not (by the principles of their own Religion) they were sure to be damned; and upon this extremity, should resolve to prosecute their wicked contrivances as far as power should enable them: In the like straights and extremities have these wretched men involved themselves (by some of their own confessions.) They have wailed so far in sacriledge and blood that they know not how to retire; They dare not confesse their wickednesse unto men, for fear of the people; lest that people which they have so long abused and ensnared, should rise up in a rage, and stone them. They dare not confesse unto God, for then they are immediately obliged to lay down their Arms, and to disclaim their error, by Repentance and Satisfaction. So far are they removed out of the way of Repentance, that if they find any of those who have twisted with them, to repent

and abhor their former wickedneſſe, and to deſire to redeem their former repur. tions by any future ſervices, they preſently look upon them as delinquent, and malignants, and the moſt dangerous of all their enemies; like the Jewiſh Lawyers, *They ſhut up the Kingdom of heaven againſt men; for they will neither go in themſelves, nor ſuffer others that would go in*; So theſe, they will neither Repent themſelves, nor ſuffer others that would repent. They have made their condition ſo deſperate, that they dare not repent; and followed Achitophels counſel ſo long in widening differences, that like Pyrats, they will chuſe rather to periſh at ſea, then put themſelves to account with any ſuſpected Port.

Nay rather then own the guilt of their own boſoms (which I am ſure they cannot ſtifle) they will lay all their wickedneſs upon the ſhoulders of their pious Soveraign, and he muſt be ſacrificed and murdered, becauſe their ſanctity (forſooth) muſt not be blemiſhed. Thus it ſhall coſt them no more but a little breath, to Vote themſelves the Saints of the Kingdom, and all men elſe Delinquents, but themſelves and their adherents; and the Juſtification of their bold miſchiefs (by an invincible law of neceſſity) muſt be the accuſation of all that oppoſe or diſſent from them.

But that which (beyond all this) adds infinitely to the weight of their wickedneſſe is this, That (notwithſtanding the world hath

hath had ſufficient Teſtimony of their prevarication with God and man, by falſifying their oaths, and ſeveral engagements, by the boldneſs and bloodineſs of their actions, to promote the Engliſh Intereſt (as they call it, that is, their own) yet they think it no ſtale fraud, ſtill to make Piety their pretenſe, and Reformation their deſigne; as if they aymed at no hing elſe, but that the Lords day may be better obſerved, the Goſpel better planted, the Kingdom better governed. Thus with the help of their fine ſpun Arts and Hypocriſies, they have made Chriſt, and his Goſpel, the Patron of all their horrid undertakings.

And here, I do not ſo much declaim, as grieve and tremble to think, what a deſperate progreſs theſe men have made toward their eternal ruine. We read of Belſhazzar, that he made a great feaſt to a thouſand of his lords, and drank wine before the thouſand; and not content with this vain-glorious exceſſe; he ſends (in his drunken humour) for the veſſels of Gold and Silver, which Nebuchadnezzar his Father had taken out of the Sanctuary of God, and makes thoſe holy Utenſils, inſtrumental to his pride and luxury; and this was ſo high a provocation, that God ſent a hand out of the inanimate wall, to write in his preſence, his certain Doom and judgement. Is it not wickedneſſe enough in theſe men, to feaſt themſelves with the blood and miſeries of their fellow ſubjects, whom they

they have made their ſlaves; To inebriate themſelves with pride and power, unleſs they make the Sacred Oracles of God inſtrumental to maintain them in their luxury? Was it not wickedneſs enough in curſed Jezabel, to diſpatch Naboth for his inheritance ſake, unleſs ſhe proclaim a Faſt to diſguiſe and cover that her bloody Deſigne? Is there not guilt enough in the murther of an incomparable King, in the robbing of a glorious Church, in the deliberate breaking of ſo many ſacred Oaths and Engagements, in the ruine of ſo many thouſand families, in the enſnaring ſo many thouſand ſouls by irreligious engagements, to maintain theſe men in their wickedneſs; but muſt all this be diſguiſed with pretenſions of piety and reformation? Can they find no other anſwer for themſelves, when they are preſſed with arguments drawn from Reaſon, Law, & Scripture, but muſt they father all their wickedneſs upon God himſelf, by deriving it from the direction of his ſacred Spirit? Muſt the Dove of peace and love be entitled to their mercileſs & bloody executions? Muſt the Spirit of meekneſs and condeſcention be made the Patron of their Tyranny and Ambition? The ſpirit that worketh ſorrow and reluctancy for ſin, be brought to countenance their juſtification and perſeverance in ſin? Oh let it never be told in Gath, nor publiſhed in the ſtreets of Aſcalon; Let not the unbelieving Jews, nor the ſons

of

of Mahomet, nor the Savage Indians ever come to hear, what a generation of vipers, and prodigious monsters hath been hatched, and fomented under the sunshine of the Gospel. How will our Enemies abroad reproach and Blaspheme our Religion, when these shall be understood to be the fruits of it, in its (falsly pretended) purities and Reformation?

Whether that *Blasphemy* which the *scribes that came from Ierusalem* were guilty of, in attributing the dispossession of unclean spirits (which they saw our Saviour did by the finger of God) to be done by *Beelzebub*, were specifically that irremissible *Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost*, I will not determine. But this I will say; That to Attribute the works of the most high God, to *Beelzebub*; and to attribute the works of *Beelzebub*, to the most high God: are *Blasphemies* of the same *Parallel*; if any thing make the difference, its the *Quo animo* of the iniquity. For men to say, when they have nothing else to say, (in defence of their Enormities) that what they do, they do by the dictate and direction of Gods holy spirit, is so bold and fearful a *Blasphemy*; that I am ready to tremble at the naming of it; But whether these pretences derive from *malice*, or *obstinacy*, or a *dissembled Iustification*, of what they know to be *Guilt* of an high nature, I cannot possibly determine. I shall from hence admire only the power, and prevalency of this *charm* of *Infatuation*; that will neither

suffer

suffer men to look *upwards* towards their God, nor *inwardly* upon themselves, nor *backwards* upon their guilty actions; but hurries them on, (with *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*,) into a Justification of their Rebellion against *Moses*, and *Aaron*, and God himself, so long: till they are swallowed up quick of Death & Desperation.

And therefore my advise shall be the same, that *Moses* gave the rest of the people that were not of that Conspiracy; *Depart I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men*, and *touch nothing of theirs*, (or touch not with them) *lest yee be Consumed in their sins*. And let every man that would preserve the life of his Happinesse, in the comfort and cleerenesse of his conscience, say with good old Jacob, *O my soul, come not thou into their secret mine honor, be not thou engaged*, (or do not subscribe their engagement;) lest thou eare of such things as please them, and thy mind and thy Conscience be defiled, and ensnared to thine inevitable ruin. And (this I conceive) may not be propounded unseasonably unto such, as either have twisted with these men, without repenting all this time, of the error of their doings; or such, as are at present their secret friends and Agents; or such as may hereafter be tempted into a Compliance, either for fear of their present power, or (which is worse) for filthy Lucre sake.

And for out brethren, and friends of the Scot-

Scottish Nation; I could wish they would seriously consider of this one thing. That the best way to satisfy the fears and jealousies, which are at present upon them, and their councels; and the best assurance they can give his *Majesty* of their sincerity unto him in all respects; must be taken from the *sight*, and the *Sorrow*, and the *humble owning* of those errors wherein they were unfortunatly engaged against his *Royal Father*. I shall not hunger after any of their *Confessions*; whether *Publike*, or *private*; nor will I adventure to Censure their intendments. Only I hope, I may have leave to entertain some fears, that they will not set this *King* upon his *Fathers Throne*, till themselves have set themselves in the *stool of repentance*, on another score then what hath been lately practised in *Scotland*. The best way I can propound, for them to set a *Crown of gold* on this *Kings head*: is to have their hearts thoroughly pricked with those *thornes* they platted in his *Fathers Crown*; & if they are really ambitious of the honour, of restoring the rights of the *Crown*, and revenging the *blood of their martyred Soveraign* upon his cruel enemies; they need not be ashamed (in some measure) to begin with themselves.

But if a professed *Recantation*, be too severe a pennance for men that would be thought they cannot err, yet let their hearts be but affected with such a close and inward for-

sorrow, as that The searcher of all hearts may accept of it; and let their resolutions for the time to come be such, as that the God of Truth and mercy may blesse, and prosper them into an ample, ripe harvest of true Christian Honour; and that the world may read the disavowing of their former errors, (if in no other character) yet in the sincerity and gallantry of their future actions, and atchievements.

Having shewed the Nature, Causes, and Symptomes of Spiritual *Infatuation*; and with a faithful, and impartial hand searched this wound unto the bottom: shall I now (with the Priest and the Levite,) passe by, and leave a soul stript, and robbed, and wounded unto death, and take no care, no Compassion upon so sad a spectacle? What; Is *there no Balme in Gilead*, for this deadly wound? Is there no oyl of mercy, to be applyed to the obstinate and obdurate sinner? Doubtlesse, so long as there is life, there is Hope; and so long as there is Hope, the Physitian cannot safely desert his Patient.

And because it is safer erring with too much Charity, then with too little; Because it is an inconsiderate Temerity, to confine the boundlesse *Ocean* of Gods mercy, to the narrow mouthed bottles of our own uncertain, & fallible Conception: I shall open a door of Hope, as far as the unerring Oracles of God shall authorize me; and the first thing I shall propound to the Infatuated spirit is, That there

there is a possibility of being Cured.

I know well, there is a *Judicial* kind of Hardnesse, when God withdrawes the sweet influence of his Grace, and delivers a man up unto himself, without ever looking more after him. That there is a sin unto Death, that strikes the Church, with Dumbnesse, that she cannot pray for it; and strikes the Soule with Numnesse, that she cannot feel the comfort of Gods mercy. There is a Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, that shall never be forgiven, because there shall never any place be found for repentance. But yet, though we may conclude that such a sin there is; yet we cannot without great rashnesse, and uncharitablenesse conclude that This, or That man is that irrecoverable sinner.

It is (for the most part) agreed, that The sin against the Holy Ghost is a Total Apostacy from the Gospel of Christ formerly acknowledged, and professed; together with a verbal Calumniating, and a real persecuting of the same; with a deliberate purpose so to continue, and persevere unto the Death. and then to passe away in that disposition. But supposing this Definition to be rightly stated; can any man say, that this mans Apostacy is Total; that it is malicious; that it is Deliberate; and that it shall be final? Saint Peter was a Blasphemer, but he did not persecute the Church; Saint Paul was a Blasphemer, and a Persecuter, but he did not persevere; There

was

was a perhaps left for Symon Magus his recovery, even at the same time, when he was in the Gall of bitternesse, and in the bond of Iniquity; when his overture was so profane, and Blasphemous, that he attempted to purchase the gift of the Holy Ghost with mony: Repentance, and prayer were prescribed unto him by Saint Peter. The schoolmen tell us, that there are six sins, that are dangerous Introductions into this irrecoverable gulf; namely Presumption, and Desperation; Impenitency, and Hardnesse of heart; The resisting of a Truth after Convincement; and the Envying Gods grace in other men. But no man can conclude a man to be Totally, and finally surprized with these, un'esse he be perfectly acquainted with the close of his life.

We read in the History of our Saviours Cures, that he cured one woman that had an issue of blood running upon her twelve yeers; another woman, whom Satan had bound, and bowed together eighteen yeers; That he cured a Cripple at the pool of Bethesda that had been there thirty and eight yeers. And if these were bodily infirmities only, and so no fit presidents, for any spiritual Cure; we read of Mary Magdalene, who had been a notorious sinner, and possessed along time by seven Divels; and yet by the mercy of her Saviour, was recovered into a more Evangelical temper, then many of the Apostles themselves, as appears Luc. 7. 44. We read also of witches,

that

that (having renounced their Baptisme, contracted with the Divel, and resigned up themselves to his entire possession, and Command for many yeers;) have yet been recovered into the Christian faith, and a Salvable condition. That madmen should be poysoned, because Physitians know not how to cure them; That menshould take away their lives, because God hath taken away their understanding, is a proceeding, that favours more of Convenience, then Conscience; for this is to put no difference at all, between Christians, and Dogs, and Cats in times of Infection. I know it is impossible in nature, for a Camel to passe through the ey of a needle, and yet we read that this and all things else are possible unto God; (I say) all things, that imply not Contradiction, or repugnancy to his nature. *We must grant,* (saith *Augustine*) *that God is able to do something, which we are not able to find out; in such works, the whole reason of the doing, is the power of the doer; It is God that hath done them, consider the author, and all doubts will cease.* And since the scripture assures us, that neither The *incestuous Corinthian* for the *haynousnesse of his* sin, nor the Theife upon the crosse, for his perseverance in sin unto the last hour, were excluded Heaven; There is little Reason, and lesse Grace, for any man to conclude himself Damned, on this side the grave. But let not any man mistake me, or deceive himself, by deriving an Encouragement unto pre-

presumption from that, which I intend only for an Antidote against Despaire. So that, a possibility of Cure being granted, our next businesse is, to propound what is most probable, and instrumental to the same.

The fat heart, (I have shewed,) is called in scripture a stony heart; if it were a brazen Heart, it might be melted; or if it were an Iron heart, it might be malleable; but the furnace has no power over the stone; the Hammer of Gods Iudgement is the fittest instrument to deale with it. Now, as the Stone in the kidney, or the Blader, is a disease of great pain, and of no small difficulty in the Cure; so is it with that disease which Divines call the stone in the Heart, or stonienesse of heart. Some Analogie, or proportion there is in the Cure of both diseases, which may serve only to illustrate one another.

Two ways Physitians have found out for the Curing of the Stone in the blader, namely, either by cutting and drawing it out of the blader, which is a work of pain; or els by dissolving it within the blader, which is a work of Art. Two ways likewise Divines are directed, in the Cure of the Stone in the Heart, namely, to Break it, by the terrors of the Law, which is a Cure of pain; or els to Dissolve it by the mercies of the Gospel, which is a Cure of great Art, and Excellency. And though for the most part, *Plures sunt quos Timor Corrigit*, They are the greater number that are driven

ven home to God by fear: yet *meliores sunt quos Amor dirrigit.* They are of a better Constitution that are won by Love. We read in in Scripture, of a Broken Heart, and a Burning Heart. A Broken Heart, when he watered his Couch with his Teares, when he roared day, and night for the very disquietnesse of his heart, upon the sad apprehension of Gods anger, and discountenance; and a Burning Heart in the two disciples that went to *Emmaus*, whose hearts are said to burn within them, whilst *Iesus* expounded unto them the Mysteries of their Salvation. Some mens hardnesse is like that of the flint, which is easier broken upon a Cushion, then an Anvil; But most mens hearts are like cracken bels: they must be broken all in pieces, and new cast by the Belfounder, ere ever they will be made to ring in Tune.

The first portion then, I would prescribe for the recovery of an Infatuared Spirit, is an Exceeding bitter one, and yet it must be taken; what it wants in sweetnesse, it hath in Salubrity. It is compounded of little else but the Terrors of the Law; The weight of Gods Justice; The separation of the soul from the body by the blow of Death, The Separation of both from the presence of God, by the Doom of Iudgement; and the view of those torments, which are Endlesse, Easelesse, Remedilesse. For the disease being Lethargick, and paralitick, (that is,) a disease that is attended with much

much drousinesse, and stupidity; It is necessary the soul be first awakened to its own danger, by the smart, and anguish of some severe application. I have known a very good Physitian, that when he could not cure the palsie any other way, would cast his Patient into a Burning Fever; and then he knew what he had to do with him. It is necessary, that the whole man be distempered, and disordered; that the mind may be the better brought into an Evangelical frame and temper.

Agreeable to this method, sure was *S. Peters* practise in the recovery of the 3000. soul's we read of Act 2 41. *Ye men of Israel, hear these words Jesus of Nazareth, a man approv'd of God among you, by miracles, wonders, and signes, which God did by him in the middest of you, as ye your selves also know; him ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain; whom God hath raised up*, &c. Here was a word of no small terror, a word able to break a *Jewish* heart in pieces; The blood of the Son of God is brought home unto them, and laid at their own doors. And see what a kind and piercing operation this bitter potion had upon their minds; it is said, *when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts, and they said unto Peter, and the rest of the Apostles, Men, and Brethren, What shall we do?* And what does S. *Peter* prescribe unto them in such an affrighted trembling condition, whilst this *Ague fit* was on them? No more

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but *Repentance* and *Baptisme*, and then immediatly applies an *Evangelical* Cordial. *Repent and be Baptized, and ye shall receive the gift of the holy Ghost; for the promise is unto you, and to your children, &c.* Thus the *converted Jaylour* being first awakened by an Earthquake, that shook the very foundation of the prison, and being at his wits end, as well as at his swords point, upon a supposition his prisoners were escaped; *he came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out and said Quid faciam ad Salutem? Sirs; what must I do to be saved?* I refuse not to do any thing that may bring me into a Salvable Condition.

Certainly, those hearts are wisely, and seasonably broken; that are moulded into a present Complyance with any thing, that may tend to their comfort, and Conversion; and the way to have a cleer, and a Saving Interest in Christ, is to see our selves irrecoverably lost without him. There are some diseases in the body, (contracted with no lesse guilt of conscience, then blemish of reputation;) wherein the patient must be brought as low in his constitution, as possibly can be, and yet Live; his spirits must be exhausted, his blood evacuated and changed, and the nearer he is brought to the gates of Death; the better hopes there is of life, and a safe recovery. And there are some diseases in the Soul, wherein the unseasonable application of Cordials strengthens the *pec-*

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cant humour, making it mortal, and irrecoverable. We read of a sort of Divels, that were not to be cast out but by prayer, and fasting. And there are sins which (for their long possession in the soul,) are not to be ejected, but by strong cries, and teares, by much self denyal, and great maceration of Spirit. Cordials are then seasonable, when the malignity of the disease is killed. Healing plaisters are then to be applied, when thy wound hath been throughly searched, and clensed. The Apostles rule is, that the old Leven be so purged out, that the regenerate *man may become a new Lump*. There were some in the Prophet Jeremies time, that thought themselves perfectly clensed and cured, when there was no such matter; for God tels them, that though they washed themselves with nitre, and much Sope, yet their iniquity was marked out before him, Ier. 2. 22.

Where let us pause a little, and enquire what these spots might be, that were so hard to be gotten out, and they are expresly set down vers. 34. *In thy skirts is found the blood of the Souls of the poor Innocents, yet thou sayest, because I am innocent, surely his anger shall turn from me. Behold I will plead with thee, because thou sayest, I have not sinned. Why gaddest thou about so much to change thy way?* So that the *Spots* which *nitre* and much *Sope* will not get out are these *Three* (which I shall leave our Jerusalem to enquire after within her

her own walls.) There is first, the deep scarlet spot of Blood-guiltiness (especially if it be *Sanguis Animarum*, the blood of souls that perish for want of sharp and sincere reproofs) Secondly, there is the white spot of pretended sanctity and impunity (notwithstanding all their guilt) and Thirdly, there is the changeable spot of gadding Inconstancy; when men reel too and fro, and stagger from one extream into another, and (without fixing upon any certain principles) Act, and drive on furiously (like *Jehu*) according as necessity or advantage shall direct them. And would you know the reason how the disease in this people came to be thus desperate; the same Prophet will inform ye, Jer. 6. 14. *They have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace.* They skinned the wound, without searching it to the quick, and left the corruption in the bottom, which made the wound to fester inwardly, and to grow desperate and incurable. So that, the first step to the cure of the infatuated spirit, is, to deal impartially with the disease; The best expedient to bring a man to believe and rely on Christ for life and salvation; is, to represent clearly his condition out of Christ, to be an estate of death and damnation. And the more we are ashamed and confounded at the sight of our own ugly selves, the more amiable and acceptable we shall appear in the sight of our Redeemer.

God hath erected two *Tribunals*, unto which all men living are summoned to appear, there to give an account of themselves; The one is within our own walls, (as I may so speak,) within our own Souls, and that is the *Tribunal of Conscience*; In which *Tribunal*, there is an undoubted power of acquitting, and condemning, as the *Delinquent* shall be found more or lesse guilty. Which I take to be very cleer from that of S. John. *If our Heart Condemn us, God is greater then our heart, and knoweth all things*; (that is,) he knoweth more by us, then we do, or can know by our selves. But *if our Heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.* 1 Ioh 20.21.

The other is that grand *Tribunal* of Iudgement, whereunto all the world shall be summoned at the General *Resurrection*, which shal be in that place which God shall chuse for the manifestation of his mercy and Justice, upon all men according as their works shall be. Now in secular and *Iudicial Proceedings*, for a man to have leave to make choice of his own *Iudicatory*, his own *Iudge*, his own *Iury*, & *witnesses*, is so high an Indulgence, & advantage; that it cannot be expected from any earthly power; & yet the great *Iudge* of *Heaven* and *Earth*, men & *Angels*, hath given this priviledge unto men; He may take his choise whether he will be judged *Here*, or *Hereafter*: by *himself*, or by *another*; God hath made us all *Chancelours* in our own Causes, with

this *proviſo*; That if we will deal truly and impartially with our ſelves, that is, if we will Summon our ſelves to appear before our ſelves, arraign our ſelves before the Tribunal of our own Conſciences, and there Examine, Indite, convict, and condemn our ſelves; we ſhall not come into any further condemnation. *If we would judge our ſelves, we ſhould not be judged of the Lord.* But if we will not judge our ſelves, we muſt ſtand or fall according to the Sentence of another. Moſt Certain it is, that *we muſt all appear before the Judgement ſeat of Chriſt, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good, or bad.* S. John in a viſion, *ſaw the dead ſmall and great, ſtand before God*, and *the books were opened, and another book was opened, which was the book of life*, and *the dead were judged out of thoſe things* which *were written in the books, according to their works.* They are *Books* in the plural, that ſhall be opened. The *Book of Nature*, The *Book of the ſcripture*, The *Book of Conſcience*. And out of theſe books ſeveral accuſations will be framed. The Divel, that Grand accuſer will ſtand forth and plead againſt us. The *abuſed Creature* will accuſe us of extortion, and injuries; *The ſouls of the holy martyrs*, will charge us with oppreſſion and bloodguiltineſs; *The Sacred Oracles of God* will charge us with infidelity, and Contempts; and our

own guilty Consciences, instead of pleading for us, will give up a verdict against us.

The only way then to supersede the judgement of that day, is, to call our selves to an account beforehand, *To agree with our adversary quickly, whilst we are in the way*, lest we be delivered up unto the Judge, and the Judge send us to that prison, from whence there is no Redemption. To rifle every cranny and corner of our hearts. To bring forth our murthering lusts, our bosom Traytors; and to use them as Joshua did the five Kings that were hid in the cave of Makkedah; that is, set our feet upon their necks, and slay them in the sight of all the world. And this if we do, we shall not fail of such a part in the first Resurrection, as will secure us from the blow both of the second death, and second judgement also. So that it is in our own choise who shall pass sentence upon us; whether our own selves, or else some other person. And what shall we be able to say for our selves, in that great and terrible day of the Lord, why the sentence of eternal death should not pass upon us, when God hath given us the space of 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60 years for the performance of so easie a task, so reasonable a service, and we have not done it.

We see with what malicious dexterity and bo'dness, blood-thirsty and deceitful men manage the Tryals, and design the executions of persons of the highest quality and merit, but

but how cold, how dull, and indiſpoſed in enquiring after the guilt of their own wretched ſouls? Certainly, ſuch men as they may be thought to be ſtrongly infected with this diſeaſe of infatuation; ſo it may be feared they are very far removed out of the way of their recovery, who have ſo much of other mens, ſo little of their own guilt before their eyes.

A Cure then (ye ſee) there is for the Infatuated ſoul, and the firſt ſtep to that Bethesda pool which cureth all diſeaſes, is by a deſcent of humiliation, But do not miſtake your ſelves, It is not every ſigh, or ſad look, no, nor every tear, that concludes a ſolid humiliation for ſin. There is a great difference between an humble man, and a man that is humbled; there are many of us (God help us) that are humbled, and driven into great ſtraits and extremities, perſons that have lived in their own Countries with great charity and hoſpitality towards others, that have neither what to eat, nor wherewithal to be clothed themſelves. And yet, I fear, were our purſes as full of ſilver, as our hearts are full of ſins we ſhould ſoon find the way to our former pride and luxury. Phyſitians are wont to cure vomiting by a vomit; and bleeding, by letting of blood; And truly, the beſt cure I can preſcribe for all our ſecular ſorrows; is by adding more ſorrow and compunction for our ſins, then I fear reſides in our dejected ſpirits.

I have dwelt long enough upon the severer part of the Cure; & it may be demanded of me, what? are the messages of the Gospel to be delivered by *Boanerges*, *the sons of thunder*? Sure, the world has more then enow of such, that take a great deal of pains to bring men unto Hell gate, by representing unto them the horrors of a damned Condition, and the irrecoverable Estate of all the world besides themselves, but then their Art fails them in bringing them back again; They can bring the soul into a deep dejection, but they know not how to raise it again; They are good at the *Corrasive*, but to seek in the application of the *Cordial*. Like our *Reformers* in *England*, they are dexterous in pulling down, but they know not how, or what to build in the place of it. These are ignorant (if not ill natured) *Physitians*, that please themselves with wounding, when they know not how to heal, & make work for their own mercinary and adulterate Art to practise on; shaping their Cures too often according to their incouragements, and though they will not sell the *gifts*, yet they can find a way to sell the *Comforts* of the *Holy Ghost*, for mony and advantage.

Now in the *Samaritans* Cure of the wounded man that fell among thieves, as he journied from *Jerusalem* to *Iericho*, we find two ingredients; *wine*, and *oyle*; not wine alone, or oyle alone, but both; first *wine* to search, & afterwards *oyl* to supple. Thus when *S. Peter* found his

his auditory pricked in their hearts, he presently applies an Evangelical Cordial, and tells them, that *the promise was made unto them, and unto their children, even as many as the Lord should call.* Thus S. Paul directs the Church at Corinth, to *deliver up the incestuous person to Satan, for the destruction of the flesh*; but it was for no other end, but that *the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus* For the Churches censure having humbled him, he writes a second Epistle to the same Church, both to *forgive him and to comfort him, lest perhaps he be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.*

And indeed, the more we are broken with sorrow and contrition, the more firm and compacted shall we find our confidence and assurance in Gods mercy. For though self-humbling be the certain fruit and effect of faith; yet faith is not so clear and conspicuous, till repentance hath scoured off the rust, but lies like a coal raked up in an heap of ashes, or like fire in a flint, which is there before, but is not discernable before the stroke of the steel hath made it so. Without doubt, the light of faith burns clearest in the dark and solitary chamber of our saddest retirement, and the believing eye hath never so cleer a prospect into heaven, as when it is full of penitent tears.

An instance whereof we have in the distressed condition of the Church of *Israel* in the Prophet Micahs time; *When good*

men were perished out of the earth, and evil and corrupt men were multiplyed, and twisted in mischievous designs, when the best man was as irksom as a briar; and the most upright, sharper then a thorn-hedge; when a friend might not be trusted, nor confidence reposed in a guide nor a secret committed to her that lay in the bosom; when the son dishonoured the father, & the daughter rose up against her mother, and a mans enemies were the men of his own house And yet in this dark & dismal night of affliction, see with what an humble confidence the Church addresseth her self to the strong God of her salvation. *Therefore will I look unto the Lord. I will wait for the God of my salvation, my God will hear me. Rejoyce not against me, O mine enemy, when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me, I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgement for me; he will bring me forth to light, and I shall behold his righteousness.*

Now though in chastning, or sorrow, or whatsoever, for the present seemeth joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yeildeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby *The Law (saith S. Paul) is our schoolmaster, to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith; but after that faith is come, we are no longer under a Schoolmaster*, Props and Supporters we know

know, are neceſſary in the building of an Arch, and ſcaffolds are neceſſary in the building of a Spire, but when once theſe fabricks are finiſhed, theſe helps and advantages are laid aſide; *The heyr, as long as he is a childe, differeth nothing from a ſervant, though he be lord of all, but is under Tutors and Governours, until the time appointed of the father.* But when he comes to full age, he underſtands his Title to his eſtate, and is underſtood to be *Sui juris*, at his own liberty in the diſpoſing of it.

There is a time when the Chriſtian is diſcharged from the Terrors of the Law, from the Bondage of ſin and Satan; and reſtored to the glorious liberty of the ſons of God. Which is not ſuch a liberty as our Anabaptiſts dream of, a liberty to live as they liſt, a liberty to deny all manner of obedience to ſpiritual and temporal Governours. As there is an Evangelical liberty, ſo there is an Evangelical yoke, and no man can pretend to the one, that does not ſubject himſelf to the other. *Omnia ſunt libera nobis per fidem, & tamen omnibus ſervi ſumus per charitatem; ut ſimul conſiſtat ſervitus libertatis, & libertas ſervitutis.*

The Goſpel gives me an exemption from the Curſe of the Law, *For there is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus*, provided always, *that they walk not after the fleſh, but after the ſpirit.* It gives me the liberty of my perſon, notwithſtanding all my debts, be-

cause they have been satisfied by my surety; but then I must understand my person to be a consecrated Temple, which I may not defile or dispose of at my pleasure. It gives me liberty and free access unto my Creator, a liberty to present my suits unto him, whensoever I am in want or extremity; a liberty to serve him without the bondage of fear; but it must be according to good old Zachariah's rule, in holiness & righteousness all the days of my life. It gives me a liberty to use his good creatures, (a priviledge which was lost in Adam, and is restored by Christ) but then it must be wisely, soberly, justly, charitably, thankfully, and contentedly.

Nay, I shall ever think it agreeable to Christian wisdom, to have my cancelled obligations still before mine eys, that I may know my greater obligations of duty and gratitude to my Redeemer. And if from a changeling, or brat of hell, I am regenerated and formed anew, according to the glorious image of my maker, yet *I* will still have an humble eye upon my former ugliness and deformity; if from a crooked, bruised, and decrepid Cripple, *I* am restored to perfect strength and soundness, *I* will hang up my crutches in the Temple, not only as memorials of my gratitude, but as monitors against any future relapse. And though *I* know my sins are forgiven and forgotten of my Redeemer, when I have my pardon under seal; yet *I* will ever retain the memory of them,

them, to aw, and humble me into an holy fear, into a constant warines & circumspection how I becoin again entangled in those snares out of which by the mercy of God I have escaped.

Thus ye see, The Law, and the Gospel, Moses and Christ, are not opposite and divided, but subordinate and serviceable one to the other. *The Law was given by Moses, but Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ.* The Law was delivered with thunders, and lightnings, and earthquakes: The Gospel descends into the soul, like rain into a fleece of wool; like Elijahs small still voice that succeeded the whirlwind and the earthquake; like the voice of the Turtle, and the singing of birds, after the winter is past, and the rain is over and gone. Moses takes his stand upon mount Ebal, and from thence proclaims the curses of God; Christ takes his stand upon mount Gerezim, and from thence proclaims his beatitudes, as appears, Mat 5.3. &c The first solemn sermon that ever he preached to his disciples, was a sermon of mercy. The first Text that ever he preached upon, was a Text of mercy; which he did not light upon by chance (as S. Austin did upon that of S Paul, Rom. 13. 13.) but (*the book of the Prophet Isaiah being delivered to him*) it is said, that *he opened the book, and found* (that is, turned to) *the place where it was written, The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath Anoynted me to Preach the Gospel*

to the poor, he hath sent me to heale the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable yeer of the Lord And sure we that are employed as his *Embassadours* for *peace* and *Reconciliation*, ought to follow him in this choise; to understand it our main businesse to Heal, and to recover, and to set at liberty, and to preach the acceptable yeer of the Lord. And if at any time wee fall upon severer theames, it is but in order unto this end, which is the grand designe of our profession

And therefore, if there be here any drooping or dejected Soul, that groanes and labours under the weight of any burthen either of Guilt, or misery; *I* shall say unto that Soul, as was said to blind *Bar timeus*; *Be of good Comfort*, rise, *Iesus thy Saviour calleth thee*. His invitation is most Gracious and Pathetical *Come unto me all yee that are weary*, and *heavy laden*, and *I will refresh yee*. Come unto me all yee that have hitherto rejected my messages of peace and Love, minding your farmes, your oxen, your wives, (that is) your pleasure, and your profit more then my seasonable invitations. Yee, that have forgotten me in the day of your peace and prosperity; and denyed, and abjured me, and my Gospel in the day of your Tryal and persecution Come unto me, all yee, that have wearied me with your Iniquities, & made me to serve with your sins, yee that have

have peirced, and ſcourged, and crucified me again afreſh by your backſliding and impenitency; yee that have ſo often grieved my good ſpirit, that would have ſealed you unto the day of your Redemption. Come unto mee all yee, that have mangled and torn the ſeamleſſe coate of my Church, to carve unto your ſelves your own baſe ends and advantages; yee that have made my houſe of prayer a den of thievs, yee that have perſecuted, and wounded me in my poor members; yee that have impriſoned; and impoveriſhed my Embaſſadours; and dethroned, and murthered mine own Anointed; yet come unto me however, you ſhall not be upbraided with the foulneſſe of your ſins, only come with broken hearts, with bleeding Souls, with the ſighs, and groanes of Labouring and heavy laden Conſciences, and I will refreſh you. If you ſhall ſtill obſcure and juſtify your ſins, you ſhall not proſper; but if you ſhall Confeſſe, and forſake them you ſhall find mercy.

Are you ſtung with the guilt you have Contracted by your voluntary, preſumptuous ſins? Behold, I am that brazen Serpent that healeth all that look up unto me. He that believeth in me, ſhall not periſh; but have life everlaſting. Are your ſouls full of Leproſy, and uncleanes? your vital ſpirits ſurprized by the plague of the Heart? your Conſciences ſtabbed to death, by your own deliberate wounds? Behold, I am that Lamb of God that taketh away the

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ſins of the world. My blood is that fountain which was opened purpoſly for ſin, and for uncleaneſſe; That Bethesda pool that cureth all diſeases whatſoever. Are your hearts as hard as the nether milſtone, or as the Adamant? It is ſaid that the Adamant it ſelf is broken with goates blood, Behold I am that Scape Goate, that bear on my head alone the iniquites and tranigreſſions of the whole world. I never did reject any that came to be healed of their bodily infirmities; and I never will reject any that ſhall come to me for any Spiritual Cure.

But the wounded ſpirit will perhaps reply, Tis true, I know, I am fairely Invited by my Saviour, but with this proviſo, that I bring a true faith, a ſincere repentance along with me; And theſe jewels are not lodged within my Cabinet; Theſe flowers grow not within the garden of my Soul. I deſire to repent with all my heart, but I cannot; and I would gladly believe, but I find I am not able.

Well; however be not diſcouraged. There is ſome life even in this deadneſſe of ſpirit; There is ſome ſecret ſparke of Grace even in this ſmoaking flaxe, which hath a promiſe it ſhall not be quenched. He that hath promiſed to accept of a willing mind according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not; will entertain and reward even a cup of cold water given in the name of a diſciple He that had reſpect unto the ſhort prayer

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of the poor dejected Publican, will have respect also unto thee, if thou be but as humble as that Publican. He that raiseth in the Soul a blessed hunger and thirst after righteousness, hath also promised, that Hunger and Thirst shal not be unsatisfied, but that he will give to him that is a thirst, to drink of the water of life freely. He that giveth both to will, and to perform, according to his own good pleasure; will in his own good time, fulfil the desire of those that fear him. So that let this be layd for a solid ground, and foundation of Christian Comfort: That the Desire of mercy, in the want of mercy, is a real mercy, and the desire of Grace, in the want of Grace, is Grace it self. And if thou do not quench these inchoations of Grace, and obstruct its operation, and progresse; whensoever the spirit of God shall blow upon these little sparks, thou shalt find them grow and increase into a Coale, into a flame, enough to chear and warm the soul with Celestial Comfort.

Hence it is that the Kingdom of God is compared to a grain of mustard seed, which is reputed to be one of the least of all seeds, and yet the Kingdom of God is entirely contained in this single Grain. Hence it is that Grace is compared to a little leven in three measures of meal, which in time will leven the whole lump. There is a time when Holy purposes are taken and accepted for good performances; I will go unto my father saith the prodigal;

gal; and behold his father comes out to meet his ſon. *I ſaid, I will confeſſe my ſin unto the Lord,* (ſaid David,) *and ſo thou forgaveſt the iniquity of my ſin.* And the ſame good King did but purpoſe in his heart to build God an houſe; and it was accepted as well as if it had been done; and in acknowledgement hereof, God promiſed to eſtabliſh *his houſe*, and his *Kingdom upon his poſterity for ever.* God accepts of ſuch payment as we are able to make, though it be in ſmall pieces, or perhaps in coyn that is cracked, or clipped, and wants its full weight; yet if it be not falſe and counterfeit, it ſhall not be turned back upon us. And truly, he that grieves, and bemoanes himſelf becauſe he cannot grieve for his ſins, or becauſe he cannot grieve ſo much as he deſires; is in a Certain way unto *that repentance*, which *is never to be repented of.*

Nay; give me leave to go one degree farther. Doeſt thou find thy ſoul enſnared with the Cords, and Cuſtomes of thine own twiſting, or art thou ſo much a ſtranger to thy ſelf, that thou dareſt not look into thy dangerous and ſuſpected Condition? doeſt thou feel the throbs and horrors of a wounded *Conſcience*, the pangs of *Hell* and *Deſpair* growing upon thy *Soul?* yet give me leave to aske thee this one Queſtion Doeſt thou (notwithſtanding thy preſent fear, and horror, *Love* thy Lord and maker? or if thou canſt not cleerly reply to that; Canſt thou but reſolve me of thy

thy *Love* to thy neighbour, not becauſe he is thy neighbour, or thy friend, or perhaps thy Companion in evil wayes; but becauſe he is a Chriſtian, a Child of God, a member of Chriſt, one that makes Conſcience of his wayes? Doeſt thou love him for the pious and gracious Enclinations thou findeſt in him? if thou doeſt; Be of good Comfort. Here is a Comfortable teſtimony, that God hath ſet his Love upon thee; though thou diſcern it not. *Hereby* (ſaith S. John,) *do we know, that we are tranſlated from death to life; becauſe we love the Brethren.* Where, *Love* is not the *cauſe*, but the *Evidence*, and reflection of Gods favour, and Benignity towards us.

And Certainly this tribute of *Love* whether it be to God, or our *neighbour*, is but *Leve onus facile jugum.* There is nothing more eaſie then *Love*; nothing more acceptable then *love*; nothing more ample & diffuſive, in its dilating and ſpreading Quality then *Love*. It wil obſcure and hide a *multitude of ſins*, from the ſevere wrath of God. *It is the fulfilling of the Law. It beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, Endureth all things.* It hath a flame that neither men nor Divels: neither Sin, nor Death, is able to extinguiſh. A wicked world may ſtrip me of my Eſtate; Impriſon, & Confine my perſon; Take away my Life; It cannot take away my *Love*. Without *Love*, were I furniſhed with *Angelical knowledge*, and expreſſion; Had I faith enough

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gal; and behold his father comes out to meet his son. *I said, I will confesse my sin unto the Lord,* (said David,) *and so thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.* And the same good King did but purpose in his heart to build God an house; and it was accepted as well as if it had been done; and in acknowledgement hereof, God promised to establish *his house*, and his *Kingdom upon his posterity for ever.* God accepts of such payment as we are able to make, though it be in small pieces, or perhaps in coyn that is cracked, or clipped, and wants its full weight; yet if it be not false and counterfeit, it shall not be turned back upon us. And truly, he that grieves, and bemoanes himself because he cannot grieve for his sins, or because he cannot grieve so much as he desires; is in a Certain way unto *that repentance*, which *is never to be repented of.*

Nay; give me leave to go one degree farther. Doest thou find thy soul ensnared with the Cords, and Customes of thine own twisting, or art thou so much a stranger to thy self, that thou darest not look into thy dangerous and suspected Condition? doest thou feel the throbs and horrors of a wounded *Conscience*, the pangs of *Hell* and *Despair* growing upon thy *Soul?* yet give me leave to aske thee this one Question Doest thou (notwithstanding thy present fear, and horror, *Love* thy Lord and maker? or if thou canst not cleerly reply to that; Canst thou but resolve me of thy

thy *Love* to thy neighbour, not becauſe he is thy neighbour, or thy friend, or perhaps thy Companion in evil wayes; but becauſe he is a Chriſtian, a Child of God, a member of Chriſt, one that makes Conſcience of his wayes? Doeſt thou love him for the pious and gracious Enclinations thou findeſt in him? if thou doeſt; Be of good Comfort. Here is a Comfortable teſtimony, that God hath ſet his Love upon thee; though thou diſcern it not. *Hereby* (ſaith S. John,) *do we know, that we are tranſlated from death to life; becauſe we love the Brethren.* Where, *Love* is not the *cauſe*, but the *Evidence*, and reflection of Gods favour, and Benignity towards us.

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to remove mountaines, & Compassion enough to sell all I had to feed the poor, and Constancy enough to endure the flames of Martyrdome, yet without Love, all this would profit me nothing. Nay; when other Graces shall expire, and be no longer serviceable unto me; my Love, shall last and abide with me for ever. For when my faith shall be resolved into vision; my Hope into fruition; my Love shall follow me beyond the gates of Death, and be my Companion unto all Eternity.

So that Love being the pulse that represents us spiritually alive or dead; The Crisis, that determines of our diseases, whether they be Curable or not; let us ever have a wary eye upon all such things, as eject and destroy Love, and therefore (as grievances unto the Holy Spirit of Love) Let all bitternesse, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking be put away with all malice. Eph. 4. 31. For sins of Ignorance, or sins of Infirmity, a pardon of Course may be easily obtained from the Throne of mercy; but for sins of malice and perversnesse, mercy is restrained, and shut up; God will not be mercifull unto such as offend of malicious wickednesse. He that will not pay so easie a Tribute as that of Love, is an irrecoverable rebel, and not fit to be owned for a subject of Christs Kingdom.

Secondly, whilst the soul is upon its recovery from a disease of Senslesnesse, and stupidity;

dity; let us ever have an especial care to avoid those sins which do *Devastare Conscientiam*, demolish, dismantle, and make Shipwrack of Conscience. For Conscience is both the *eye* and the *Awe* of the Soul, the *Monitor* in the School of the inward man, the *Superintendent*, or supervisor of thoughts, words, and actions, without which the Soul is like a Ship without its Rudder, that cannot put to Sea without inevitable losse and hazard; Great sins (like *Davids murther*, and *Adultery*) cast a man into a deep sleep, or rather into a *Swoon*; They deprive a man of all sense and motion. There is nothing so pernicious as a Relapse, to a man that is in a hopeful way of recovery.

Thirdly, being recovered into some reasonable degree of Health and strength; Let us be sure to have a constant recourse & application to those meanes of Grace, whereby the inward man receives his dayly growth, and nourishment. We read Mark. 5. That when our Saviour had recovered the ruler of the *Synagogues* daughter from death to Life he *Commanded that something should be given her to eate*. Sure I am, he soul that is once recovered from the death of sin to the life of Grace, hath great need of Spiritual nourishment of *Sermons*, and *Sacraments*, of *Ministerial Absolution*, and all *Evangelical* helpes, and comforts, that may promote the assurance of our *Election*, and may enable us to *work out our Salvation with fear and Trembling*.

Last-

Lastly. To these, give me leave to recommend to your Care and practise, those grand helpes, and assistances of *Prayer*, and *Alms giving*, which are as the props and buttresses whereon the Soul stands firme and unshaken, in the day of her visitation. It is said of *Zacheus* the *Publican*, that he stood forth, and said unto *Christ*, *Behold Lord, the halfe of my goods* I give *to the poor*, and *if I have taken any thing* from *any man, by false accusation*; *I restore him foure fold* A resolution (doubtlesse) of one that had entertained Christ in his Heart, as well as in his House. And upon the growth of the Gospel in the Apostles Times, we read of divers which formerly used Curious Arts, that brought their books together, and burned them before all men, to the value of fifty thousand pieces of Silver. When the Artists of this jugling Age will disclaime before all men, the Curious and fine spun Arts they have used for the gaining of their ends, and advantages; I know not. Or when the *Publicans* and notorious Sinners of our Nation, will have so much Charity, as to give the halfe of their goods, to those poor which themselves have made; or so much Honesty to restore in any proportion, what they have taken from their brethren by false accusation, I cannot say. Sure I am, a day will come, when they shall not carry all things by voting, as they please; when all their usurped power and greatnesse, will but encrease the stinck

ſtink and naſtineſſe of their unſavory Memory; when the Spirits which theſe Chymiſts have extracted from Sacriledge, Rapine, and Innocent blood; will ſerve only to put them into a Condition to be more Capable, and ſenſible of Torment. In the prevention of which all that can be done by them, or further adviſed by me is but this. That they would ſeaſonably entertain that councel which the prophet Daniel gave to King Nebuchadnezzar, when a judgement was gone out againſt him, namely, To *break of their ſins* by *righteouſneſſe, and their Iniquities*, by *ſhewing mercy to the poor*. That they would according to our *Saviours* advice, *make themſelves friends* of the *Mammon* of *unrighteouſneſſe*. That they would not think it a piece of *Popery*, to demonſtrate their Repentance, by Reſtitution, and Satisfaction, as farre as may be. And if a Compenſation cannot be made in *Specie*, as to particular injuries, and oppreſſions; yet they have an object large enough if they pleaſe to look upon it; Indeed, I know not well how they ſhould be able to look of it. Sure they cannot but underſtand, their brethren whom they have driven into exilement and extremities abroad, are ready to ſtarve in the ſtreets of ſtrangers. They cannot remove themſelves (I me ſure) from the Cries and Complaints of the fatherleſſe and widdow at home; The Sorrowful ſighing of poor priſoners cannot but come before them. And

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if all these could be obscured; yet I shall desire them to believe; That I do not remember them of these objects, and inducements unto Charity, out of any other respect, more then out of pitty, and Charity to their immortal *Souls*. Let them therefore render unto *Cesar*, the things that are *Cesars*; and unto *God*, the things that are *Gods*: and unto themselves and their own Consciences, the Care that belongs to their eternal preservation.

I shall Close up this discourse with the observation of a Command which I find in the *Levitical law*. And it is this: *Whatsoever uncleanesse it be that a man is defiled withal, and it be hid from him when he knoweth of it, then he shall be guilty. Or if a soul swear, pronouncing with his lips to do evil*, or *to do good*; *whatsoever it be that a man shall pronounce with an oath*, and *it be hid from him*; *when he knoweth of it, then he shall be guilty in one of these.* And *it shall be when he shall be guilty in one of the things, that he shall Confesse that he hath sinned in that thing.* What pollution, and defilement of mind and Conscience, the world is guilty of in its present General Defection from the Gospel, or how far, mens soules are tainted with this Disease of spiritual *Infatuation*, I know not. What *Oathes* and engagements, even have taken to *God* and their *King*, and with what *Conscience* and *Integrity*, they have kept them, shall be left to every one to know from themselves, into whose hands these

papers of mine shall come. If this *Treatise* (by the good blessing of God,) shall be so fortunate, as to shew unto any the errors, and iniquities of their *Blind* and *Bedlam* wayes: I shall humbly and earnestly desire, that I may reape the *benefit* of their *prayers*, and *God* the *Honour* of their *Conversion*.

FINIS.

Soli Deo Gloria.

